

**EAST ASIA**  
HISTORY, POLITICS, SOCIOLOGY,  
CULTURE

*EDITED BY*

**EDWARD BEAUCHAMP**

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

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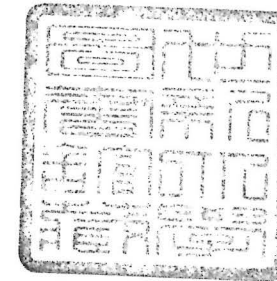
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**THE POLITICS OF LOCALITY**  
**MAKING A NATION OF COMMUNITIES**  
**IN TAIWAN**

HSIN-YI LU



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For my parents, Ing-Jiau Shy and Chang-Hui Lu

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# THE POLITICS OF LOCALITY



## INTRODUCTION

**W**HAT IS 'TAIWANESE CULTURE'?" ON A LATE AUTUMN DAY IN 1999, THIS question was raised in supposedly casual conversation with a friend as we rode a Metro bus in Seattle. My friend Catherine was a cosmopolitan law school student from Taiwan; neither her research interest in the Mainland Chinese legal system nor her personal choice of marrying an American indicated any nationalistic obsession. Yet, in a well-meaning manner she asked me: "Have you ever wondered what 'Taiwan' is? No one has formally taught us about our culture since elementary school. Hence I often found myself at a loss whenever asked by my foreign friends to show something unique and representative of Taiwan. Perhaps you, as an anthropologist, have a better idea than me?"

Catherine's question echoed a similarly awkward experience that my aunt had: In September 1999 my fifty-year old aunt came to Seattle for a training program held for middle-level bank managers from the Asia-Pacific region. The last night of the two-week program was scheduled to be an "international dinner party," in which the participants were expected to attend in their national costumes. Everyone put on his or her colorful garment except my aunt, who wore a plain business suit for the party. Officially, Taiwan's national costume was *qipao* (cheongsam), a tight Chinese dress with side vents, however my aunt did not think qipao could possibly represent her culture. Qipao was from Mainland China, she said. Until the island's government figures out a more appropriate national costume, she would rather wear her business suit for the party.

The two examples above illustrate the context in which the national culture, or its iconography, developed into a pressing issue for contemporary Taiwan. As global interaction became more frequent, the people gradually

found that they desired a culture to distinguish themselves as "Taiwanese." As a result, this question has become a collective inquiry: what is Taiwanese culture? Where can it be found? And, perhaps more importantly, how does it differentiate us from others, the other nations of the world?

From a historical perspective, the most interesting aspect of this earnest pursuit for culture is that until the 1980s most people thought they knew what their national culture was. Cultural icons such as *guobao* (the treasures of the Taipei National Palace Museum), *guoju* (Peking opera), *guohua* (Chinese ink painting), and *guoyue* (Chinese orchestra) were adored by the public as representations of the national essence, although the "nation" then had very different connotation. After the late 1980s, however, these icons rapidly lost their symbolic power. Even if they were still regarded as high arts and prefixed with *guo* (national), the association between them and the Taiwanese culture was virtually non-existent. Authentic Taiwanese-ness, as many have come to believe, existed somewhere else, waiting (and needing) to be uncovered.

## TAIWAN: CONTESTED IDENTITIES

This book is an ethnographic record of the collective search for "the authentic" in Taiwan, a *de facto* island state struggling for its national sovereignty under the constant threat from its self-claimed Chinese motherland. In a process parallel to the production of Asia/Pacific as a cultural space, the recent collective search for authenticity in Taiwan took its form in "an assertion of historical experience and local enclaves."<sup>1</sup> Culture then served as a primary means for Taiwan to obtain international recognition of a unique, non-Chinese, identity, and to resist the potential ingestion of the island nation into the Chinese mainland.

Very few places in the world have experienced the same level of anxiety and complexity of identity formation as Taiwan. In expounding upon the odd, conflicting, and phony claims of its national identity, *The Economist* commented that if Taiwan were a person "Freud might well have been interested" in the case.<sup>2</sup> To elaborate on the psychopathological metaphor, the cause of Taiwan's schizophrenic condition is its frequent, drastic, and often-imposed identity shifts, resulting from rapid changes of political power, during the past two centuries: In 1895 the island's inhabitants, most of them of Southeastern Chinese descent, found themselves colonized by the Japanese as an outcome of the Treaty of Shimonoseki signed by the Qing Empire. After fifty years, just when a significant portion of the population began to adopt Japanese surnames and customs, Taiwan was turned over to the Chinese Nationalist party-state, Kuomintang, (hereafter KMT) upon the agreement made by the Alliance at the Cairo Conference. Through various "normative machines" the KMT effectively constituted a cultural imaginary of the island as "the fortress for reviving the Chinese nation" (*minzu fuxing baolei*).

Between the 1960s and the 1970s, Taiwan was celebrated as "more Chinese" than mainland China; the island claimed to be the haven for Chinese culture since the communist government wrecked such on the mainland. The image of Taiwan as being a bounty of Chinese culture was severely challenged in the 1980s however. The famous declaration that the late president Chiang Ching-Kuo made in 1987—"I am a Taiwanese too"—marked the inevitable political indigenization of the KMT. Five years later in 1991, president Lee Teng-hui began to tout the notion of Taiwan as a *shengming gongtong ti* (living community, or *Gemeinschaft*). The purposely-blurred association between "community" and the nation-state finally became explicit when Lee declared that the relationship between Taiwan and China should be a "special state-to-state relationship" (*guo yu guo de teshu guanxi*). Thereafter the nation-building project obtained official recognition and eventually became the dominant discourse after Chen Shui-Bian, a pro-independent politician, won the presidential election in March 2000.<sup>3</sup>

With that historical background in mind, it is no wonder that identity politics and nationalism were the most researched topics in Taiwan studies during the past decade. Cumulatively this research provided a comprehensive picture and an overarching analytical framework of Taiwan's nation-building project. This book however attempts to take a different approach, as Herzfeld proposed in his analysis of the Greek nationalism, by conducting "an anthropology of nationalisms and nation-states."<sup>4</sup> Herzfeld argued that the mission of anthropology is to focus on the minuscule level of everyday detail in a specific locale and examine how the nation-state project actually affects "less than articulated minds." In this regard, very few studies have offered such an account of the daily and local operations of Taiwan's nation-building project.

This book focuses in detail on how the "less than articulated" aspects of Taiwan's national imaginary operated in and through local places. I argue that many local practices operated through the mechanism of "structural nostalgia," defined by Herzfeld as the "collective representation of an Edenic order—a time before time—in which the balanced perfection of social relations has not yet suffered the decay that affects everything human."<sup>5</sup> It allows modern citizens to "explain away the sorry state of today's world" by invoking images of a now-vanished perfection of social harmony. Through a "social poetics" of everyday life people are thus able to negotiate "the paradoxes and perplexities of identity in the modern nation-state." The paradoxes and perplexities of Taiwan's identity, I shall add, did not originate from the nation-state alone. For the newly democratized, trade dependent, and politically vulnerable Taiwan, the impact of globalization was both liberating and confusing: Taiwan was at once an inconsequential island *and* an economic miracle, a place on the geographic fringe *and* a model of economic development for China, a former Japanese colony *and* a "renegade province" of

China, etc. All these impossible pairings put its people in a great uncertainty. Thus they resorted to a structural nostalgia for resolution.

In the following chapters I focus on several cases—all at the local level—to illustrate how people utilized the place as a vehicle for negotiating the paradoxes of identity. Ironically, anthropology in its classic mode of operation—providing static, timeless accounts of a singular place—came itself to play a significant role.

### FIELDWORK ENCOUNTER

"You are an anthropologist? What is your *fieldwork* topic?" asked my friends from Hobei Cultural and Historical Society.<sup>6</sup> It was September 1997, the beginning of my twelve months of fieldwork. I had just begun to attend the Society's weekly study sessions and felt uneasy about revealing that *they* were my fieldwork subjects.

In addition to my shyness and reluctance to assert an authoritative distance as a researcher, my uneasiness was further enhanced by the discovery that these friends, whom I had targeted as *my informants*, themselves went out to *do fieldwork* every weekend. "Doing fieldwork" was part of the self-training process by which this small group of enthusiastic volunteers improved their understanding of their home place. They read and discussed their township history; on Sundays they ventured to visit sites and historical remains, or just grieved over the traces of the vanished, revealed by textual records. Sometimes they did on-site interviews with elderly residents about the historical changes of the place. Sometimes they discovered and salvaged artifacts that had not been previously recorded or that had been assumed to have disappeared. However trivial these relics appeared to me—such as a brick imported from mainland China in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, worn-out tombstones, or the shell of a Japanese-period tap water facility—my friends would take a tremendous amount of time and effort to record them in detail. They took notes of the dates of each poem inscribed on the walls of a temple, or painstakingly clarified the color changes of a particular building through time. The field trips within their hometown never failed to excite them. There were always possibilities to discover something new; the past was waiting to be unearthed, collected, and recorded.

Soon I realized that my friends' fascination with fieldwork, a tool to accumulate knowledge otherwise unattainable through normal school education or textbooks, was indeed an island-wide phenomenon. Initially, Taiwan's local history research emerged to challenge the cultural hegemony of the central government and the rigidity of the KMT-censored educational system; after 1994, however, the number of people and organizations devoted to research on local histories and cultures grew so quickly that the government began to give them a socially recognizable identity (*shehui shenfen*). National conferences, sponsored by the central and county-level cultural institutions, were

held to provide forums for culture workers to exchange fieldwork experience.<sup>7</sup> Special programs were initiated to fund local research and field trips. Public schools began to cooperate with local culture workers to design and implement "native-place curricula" (*xiangtu jiaocai*). Young students were encouraged to do fieldwork as their class assignments so they could experience and understand the "real Taiwan."<sup>8</sup> Eventually, the amateur fieldwork that began as an attempt to reclaim the cultural intimacy of the local place burgeoned and became institutionalized into a nation-wide nostalgia industry.

In his analysis of ethnographic writings, James Clifford pointed out that lamentation over the vanished is a predominant narrative structure of the "salvage ethnography."<sup>9</sup> In its representational practice, "the other is lost . . . but saved in the text."<sup>10</sup> He contended that the salvage act of the authentic, however genuine that may be, can only be allegorical, signifying the structure of feeling of our existing condition as "inauthentic" and socially fragmentary. For us the modern subjects, the life of "wholeness" is a thing in the past, grasped only through writing.<sup>11</sup> In ethnographic context, Clifford further maintained, the act of writing confirms the status of the ethnographer as the guardian of an authenticity otherwise removed from the everyday context.

Clifford's analysis opens a productive space for interpreting Taiwan's popular ethnographies. The public fascination with fieldwork and ethnographic writings were prompted by the "structural nostalgia" in 1990s, when the feeling of alienation and fragmentation was most present among the ordinary citizens. The act of doing fieldwork and writing reports also bestowed academic capital. Doing fieldwork and writing/publishing ethnographies empowered the culture workers, granting them rights and authority over the past that was previously a research territory accessible only to the academics.

In my situation, the burgeoning public attention on anthropology made my research process at once interesting and troubling. On the one hand, I focused my research on the socio-political processes involved in the production of the proper "object of ethnographic desire"<sup>12</sup>—namely the "local culture"—in Taiwan's public ethnographies. On the other hand, my description frequently slipped into a reified account of the unmistakable existence of "the local."

In his analysis of the Indonesian New Order discourse of diversity, John Pemberton observed that the blurred distinction between "the remnant particulars of a now unsituable past" and "New Order displays of an elaborate cultural diversity" troubles ethnographic practices; "the search for conventions that might inform Javanese culture, or a culture, parallels the process of Mini-ization in many respects. It is as if the ethnographic move to document and interpret customary practices winds up cataloging 'diversity' in all its

myriad forms, as anthropological and New Order disciplinary interests in culture coincide."<sup>13</sup> In Taiwan the state and public accounts of "local diversity" also converged with anthropological practices. Moreover, the current self-reflective fashion of anthropology did not seem to unsettle the public faith in ethnography as an unerring tool to record local differences. As Eva Mackey discerned, "The dilemma for anthropologists is that just as our theories about the construction of culture and the invention of tradition reach new stages of sophistication, previously marginalized peoples are constructing heroic histories and mobilizing ideas about authentic identities, and doing so as *political strategies*."<sup>14</sup>

Why was my fieldwork encounter so troubling? Somehow I wondered whether it was not because I felt disconcerted by the writings of local intellectuals, as they often showed more comprehensive understanding than me regarding the socio-historical details of a specific place. They also had better access to archives and elderly informants because of their extensive networks in their hometown. As Clifford pointed out, in the ethnographer's view, "Writing is both empowering . . . and corrupting."<sup>15</sup> For the following reasons the anthropologist is often unsettled by the fact that the cultures studied are already writing themselves: First of all, the "ethnographic authority" of the anthropologist is troubled by the loss of privilege over the control of writing; then when the "cultural effect" produced in the writing process is replicated by the natives themselves, it becomes a disturbing question as to "what is the proper subject for the anthropologist." The third complication of "native writing history" is that it indicates an impossibility of tracing the origin. This is very similar to the "unsettling regression" that Raymond Williams noted in the narrative structure of the Western pastorals: "For each time one finds a writer looking back to a happier place, to a lost, 'organic' moment, one finds another writer of that earlier period lamenting a similar, previous disappearance."<sup>16</sup> In Taiwan while all the writings and fieldwork strive to produce an uncorrupted locality, the sources that they rely on are in themselves products at the moments of loss. As I describe in more detail in chapters three and six, the earliest "native-place" studies of Taiwan emerged in the 1920s, inspired by *minzokugaku* (ethnology) from its metropole Japan. In those earlier writings done by colonial intellectuals, the "allegory of salvage" already prevailed.

### ON ETHNOGRAPHIC POSITIONALITY

The complexity of this anthropological research thus leads to a personal reflection of my ethnographic positioning. Ever since the publication of *Writing Culture: The Politics and Poetics of Ethnography*, how the ethnographer positions him/herself in the field has become a central issue for anthropological methodology. For many anthropologists, ethnography remains an

inherently personal endeavor; its scope of vision and ways of theorization necessarily correspond to individual experience and positionality.

My fieldwork was conducted in three different places—Tanshui, Ilan, and Baimi. Corresponding to the differential affiliations that I established with the people living in those three locales, my involvements with their cultural work also differed. I was born and raised in Tanshui—a town of 100,000—and observed its radical transformation from a historical harbor town to a suburban bedroom community of metropolitan Taipei over the past two decades. I also witnessed how severely a township government's mismanagement, resulting from age-old factional politics and sheer incompetence, harmed the natural and cultural landscapes of a place. Therefore I felt great empathy for its local culture workers who focused on heritage preservation efforts to retain Tanshui's sense of place, a Herculean mission considering the geographical proximity between Tanshui and the Taipei City. I also shared their somewhat parochial view that the township history of Tanshui is representative of Taiwan's national history—an argument applicable to dozens of notable towns across the island.

Due to their limited resources, the Tanshui culture workers were eager for fresh faces. My "native status" and my parents' extensive network in town further legitimized my membership in the local cultural and historical societies. When I first contacted them about my project, their expectation was that I would take an active role, rather than be an impartial observer. During my six-month stay in Tanshui, I participated in every study sessions and field trips held by Hobei. I was also, upon request, trained to be an on-call tour guide for local cultural and historical walks. I avoided imposing academic fieldwork techniques and epistemology lest they would "pollute" the amateur practices. Yet my participation already affected the direction of these organizations. Being an active participant of Hobei enabled me to attend national conferences that were open exclusively to practicing culture workers. But, the Tanshui saga also limited my research scope. Since I was paying close attention to the difficulties those cultural practitioners encountered, I gradually lost sight as to how their activities fit into a broader picture.

My involvement with Ilan—a county of 450,000—was even more peculiar. My first contact was with Dr. Chen Chi-nan, who was then the chief executive of the Yang Shan Cultural Foundation, a quasi-think tank for the county magistrate. Trained within the same discipline, he understood immediately my need for "a field" and made some suggestions without imposing any obligation. He generously offered me an office space and full access to the Foundation's archive collections. From my preliminary library research and interviews, I soon realized that the "core field" of Ilan's cultural construction lay within its County Cultural Center. I had to conduct my fieldwork within that cultural office, but how?

One day the opportunity came. The Ilan Cultural Center needed someone to write an annual review of its cultural administrations due three months later. Since the Foundation was just one block from the center, and the staff members of the two organizations worked closely on many projects, the center soon learned about a dislocated PhD student who appeared to have too much free time. Therefore they offered the work to me, with a promise that I would have access to the documents and human resources of the center in exchange for helping them with the project. I swallowed their bait and worked as a governmental worker for three months.

My work at the cultural center proved valuable. I became acquainted with the grassroots workers throughout the county by way of numerous meetings, conferences, and informal gatherings. Furthermore, it gave me a legitimate identity to conduct my research in this socially conservative county. I found on many occasions that it was much easier and socially more acceptable to introduce myself as governmental employee than a female doctoral student from a mysterious American university. One thing I did not anticipate, however, was the implicit tension between the cultural center and some of the grassroots organizations. Issues regarding social justice surfaced in the process of resource distribution; there was also a pervasive discontent among the citizens that the county government invested too much in the so-called superficial, extravagant cultural activities, which I address in chapter four. Yet, because I worked closely with the governmental workers, I empathized with their visions and was unable to evaluate their work from a critical perspective until long after I returned to the US.

Three months of office work resulted in a sufficient textual collection and policy analysis, yet my "anthropologist blood" kept me wanting to research a "real field." Baimi—a declined stone mining neighborhood on the southern margin of Su-ao Township—thus emerged on the horizon. From first appearance, Baimi seemed perfect as an anthropological field: the dusty village had virtually no new houses or newcomers. In addition, Baimi seemed to have a solid community organization dedicated to revitalization efforts. Therefore I moved into Baimi for the last three months of my research. My involvement stirred great excitement among the community activists. As community planning had become a popular profession for the younger generation, especially those newly graduated in the social sciences and urban planning, the local residents perceived me as yet another professional on assignment even though I explained clearly my research agenda. They requested me to assist with proposal writing, community history project, curriculum design of middle-school student training, and so on. I took on all the above requests as an act of reciprocity; yet soon I realized that I would be constructing my own field if I did not consciously and constantly restrain the level of my participation.

In general, the complexity of my ethnographic positioning derived from the fact that I was doing fieldwork "at home," where native anthropologists have actively participated in its homeland-making program. As I mention repeatedly in the following chapters, the most candid advocate of Taiwan's community-building project—the climax of Taiwan's homeland searching saga—was an established anthropologist. Moreover, there have been frequent uses of anthropological knowledge in Taiwan's place-making practices. Therefore people welcomed my participation, assuming I, an anthropologist returning to her native place, would greatly contribute to their place-making project by utilizing my professional skill. The expectation inherently complicated my positionality.

Given that anthropological knowledge played a significant role in Taiwan's nostalgia industry, the possibility that my project would become yet another building brick to the very discourse it attempted to analyze brought certain unease. Even though I steadily strove for balance between participating in the nostalgia industry and retaining an analytical objectivity, my efforts failed from time to time. This risk may be demonstrated in Chapter five, a critical ethnography of the construction of a "folk art community." My original goal was to problematize the notion of "community" as a bounded entity; yet through the process of writing, a tangible "community" gradually emerged in my description.

Nonetheless, it is not my intention to take a completely deconstructivist view. In discussing the complexity of de-essentializing the romanticism of homeland and the tenuous relationship between place and identity, origin and authenticity, Schein warns that a rash antiessentialist criticism of nostalgia might suffer from "assuming the authority of the truth claims of the investigator who is presumed to see history better."<sup>17</sup> Adding to her sensible argument, not only is it, I feel, inadequate to problematize the Taiwanese romanticized account of the past, as if this researcher had better answers and keener insights regarding the "truth" of history, but I, as a no less dislocated modern subject, have likewise shared so much longing for a stable homeland.<sup>18</sup>

If Herzfeld is correct in stating that "the writing of ethnography itself is both a social and a poetic act",<sup>19</sup> then what will be the outcome for such an act? Following his critique of the traditional ethnographic project as "isomorphic with the very knowledges it seeks to discover and document," Appadurai proposed that we re-envision ethnography as "a record of the multifarious modes for the production of locality." In other words, the ethnography of a locale is actually the ethnography of the "techniques for the production of locality."<sup>20</sup> Defined by Hugh Raffles, locality is "a set of relations, an ongoing politics . . . in which places are discursively and imaginatively materialized and enacted through the practices of variously positioned people and political economies."<sup>21</sup> In Taiwan's context, we may see its locality as a co-production of state administrators, "organic intellectuals" such as

culture workers, cultural industries (mass media and tourist industries), and ethnographers. Therefore I envision my project as a record of a social process, in which "native knowledge" and professional skills cooperated to produce the local place as a field for knowledge, space of empowerment, and site for appropriation in the 1990s Taiwan.

## FRAMEWORK OF CHAPTERS

This book investigates the multiple social forces encompassed in the production of "local" (*zaidi*) and "community" (*shequ*), two ubiquitous terms in the lexicon of the national essence in 1990s Taiwan. Drawing on both fieldwork and historical research, it examines the collaboration among the state, the culture workers, and the mass media in constituting a localism in the face of cultural nationalism and increased global transaction. I argue that the emergence of a profound concern with locality in Taiwan is tied to its national imaginary in the global terrain. For an island caught between the desire to participate in the international community and the pressure from The People's Republic of China to censure that desire, the "local" provides a secure, apolitical ground for a distinctive, recognizable, national culture and citizenship. The wide spectrum of "local diversity" also affirms the island's new code of national sovereignty, which emphasizes progressiveness, pluralism and flexibility.

Because the emergence of Taiwan's place consciousness parallels the global awakening of the imperative of local diversity, my first chapter presents a dialogue between the Western scholarship and Taiwan's intellectual discourses; issues include the dialectical relationship between globalization and localization, the debates of place-based movements, and the refashioning of national sovereignty in the face of a new East Asian regionalism and global capitalism.

Chapter two explains Taiwan's policy changes in cultural administrations and education system during the 1990s, which enabled local cultural and historical societies to thrive. I trace the cultural policy of the old KMT regime back to the 1960s when it served to carry through a totalitarian will that claimed to be the orthodoxy of a historical and cultural China. In contrast, the 1990s witnessed the rise of a Taiwanese popular culture. Cultural policy was reoriented towards local communities. The most significant shift occurred in 1994, when the "Integrated Community-Making Program" (*shequ zongti yingzao*) was enacted by the Council for Cultural Affairs. I argue that this community-making policy was proposed to define and consolidate the national boundary, as well as to replace the division between mainlanders and native Taiwanese—the most awkward ethnic conflict within the KMT polity—with less polarized regional differences.

Chapter three explores how the notions of cultural heritage became articulated with an alternative, post-industrial vision of development in a local

site during the early 1990s, as opposed to the previously dominant, economic-minded, model of unregulated, limitless development.<sup>22</sup> I argue that this is a historically contingent articulation, often associated with or appropriated by a Hoklo ethnic nationalism that has prevailed in the public discourse since the late 1980s.<sup>23</sup> I focus on several active local cultural and historical societies to elucidate the interwoven relationships between nationalistic politics and the emergent public attention in local histories and cultures. The members of those societies were actively involved in the processes of salvaging and exhibiting the local histories of Tanshui—one of Taiwan's most popular tourist towns—for nostalgic consumption. Through interviews, participant observation, and textual analysis of local publications, I demonstrate how multiple layers of political motivations of the state and local intellectuals were encapsulated in the production of a local place, where the vernacular histories and landscape were narrated as Taiwan in microcosm.

Chapter four is centered on Ilan, a county where the local elite actively participated in the county government's project to create a unique place through political, discursive, and cultural practices. The "Ilan experience" exemplified the transition and operation of Taiwan's new form of governmentality, which highlights the hybridity and multicultural essence of Taiwan's past, the importance of a transparent and humane-scale bureaucracy, and a flexible and globally informed administration system. I use official documents, newspaper articles, participant observation and interviews to illustrate how the locality of Ilan was constructed at the intersection of national and regional political forces.

Chapter five demonstrates how the governmental project of community making was enacted in a local community. Based on fieldwork and historical research done in Baimi, a "model" community of the Ilan County, I investigate how the projection of the "community" descending from the state and local governments articulated, or failed to articulate, the complexity of community politics in real life.

Chapter six describes three cases of a peculiar domestic tourism that burgeoned during the mid-1990s and helped articulate different local places into a nationscape. This kind of domestic tourism was often conducted in two forms—*tianye* (fieldwork) and *xiangtu daolan* (in-depth native-place guided tour). The public fascination of *tianye*, which often accompanied festivals, folklore exhibitions, and so on, manifested the collective desire for the "authentic," while constituting an unwittingly ironic parallel to the practices of classical anthropological methodology. Likewise, people involved in *xiangtu daolan* often claimed themselves "different from ordinary tourists" and imagined their traveling as informative and educational. The three cases I present in this chapter are Tanshui, Dadaocheng, and the Ilan County. In Tanshui we witness a tour of the national past, which presented an incoherent picture of the less-than-successful outcome of historic preservation and

an incomplete vision of the nation's modernized aspect. A tour to Dadaocheng takes us to one of the oldest neighborhoods in Taipei. Due to the redevelopment of the city along with economic growth, most of the historic buildings have been either demolished or radically renovated. Therefore the tour does not really lead you to "see" anything but the disappearance of the historic traces. Finally the Ilan County has been consciously constructed, through aggressive advocating of tourism, as a model for the nation's progressive future. By traveling between their home and these destination sites, travelers became aware of the mosaic of local communities as a colorful picture representing the multicultural Taiwanese nation.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Rob Wilson and Arif Dirlik, "Introduction," in Rob Wilson and Arif Dirlik, eds., *Asia/Pacific as Space of Cultural Production* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), 8.

<sup>2</sup> *The Economist*, v. 315 (June 2, 1990), 35. I owe this reference to Christopher Hughes, *Taiwan and Chinese Nationalism: National Identity and Status in International Society* (London: Routledge, 1997).

<sup>3</sup> For a detailed account of the transformation of identity politics in Taiwan, see Hughes, *Taiwan and Chinese Nationalism: National Identity and Status in International Society*, and Alan M. Wachman, *Taiwan: National Identity and Democratization* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1994).

<sup>4</sup> Michael Herzfeld, *Ours Once More: Folklore, Ideology, and the Making of Modern Greece* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982).

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 109.

<sup>6</sup> Hobei was the English name that the Society members adopted for themselves. The name originated from the Hoklo pronunciation of "huwei"—the vernacular place-name for Tanshui.

<sup>7</sup> In a surprising parallel fashion, David E. Whisnant wrote how "culture workers," often "educated, urban, middle-and upper-class, liberal," constructed the Appalachian culture out of their anxiety that the traditional mountain culture was endangered. I drew the term "culture workers" from his book. See David E. Whisnant, *All That is Native & Fine: The Politics of Culture in an American Region* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1983).

<sup>8</sup> Zheng Zhiming, *Wen hua Taiwan* [Cultural Taiwan] (Taipei: Dadao wenhua shiye youxian gongsi, 1996), 3.

<sup>9</sup> James Clifford, "On Ethnographic Allegory," in James Clifford & George E. Marcus, eds., *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (University of California Press, 1986).

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 112.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 113.

<sup>12</sup> John Pemberton, *On the Subject of "Java"* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994), 11.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>14</sup> Eva Mackey, "Postmodernism and Cultural Politics in a Multicultural Nation: Contests over Truth in the *Into the Heart of Africa* Controversy," *Public Culture* 7 (1995), 403. Emphasis original.

<sup>15</sup> Clifford, "On Ethnographic Allegory," 118.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 113.

<sup>17</sup> Louisa Schein, "Diaspora Politics, Homeland Erotics, and the Materializing of Memory," *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique* 7, no.3 (1999), 700.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Michael Jackson, *At Home in the World* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995).

<sup>19</sup> Michael Herzfeld, *Cultural Intimacy: Social Poetics in the Nation-State* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 23.

<sup>20</sup> Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press 1996), 181–2.

<sup>21</sup> Hugh Raffles, "'Local Theory': Nature and the Making of an Amazonian Place," *Cultural Anthropology* 14, no.3 (1999), 324.

<sup>22</sup> Andreas Huyssen discussed a similar usage of history and traditions in the 1970s American Avant-gardes movement. He argued, "The 1970s' search for roots, for history and traditions, was...a multi-faceted and diverse search for the past (often for an alternative past) which, in many of its more radical manifestations, questions the fundamental orientation of Western societies toward future growth and toward unlimited progress." See Andreas Huyssen, *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1986), 171.

<sup>23</sup> Some recurrent arguments in this thread were: the DPP had a more progressive vision of Taiwan's future development than the KMT; the Hoklo people took better care of the land than the greedy mainlanders, so on and so forth.

## MAPPING THE LOCAL IN A GLOBAL TERRAIN

**B**ENTU HUA (INDIGENIZATION) AND QUANQIU HUA (GLOBALIZATION) ARE PROBABLY the two most compelling and ubiquitous themes in the lexicon of Taiwanese-ness today. Since the mid-1990s, when president Lee Teng-hui gradually consolidated his power, Taiwan has experienced a new form of nation-building process that simultaneously situated itself as separated from the cultural China and juxtaposed to other national sovereignties within the international community. Meanwhile, the dialectical relationship between globalization and localization received increasing attention in Taiwan's scholarly circles. The role of the nation-state in the global terrain also became highly contested issue. For those sympathetic with the nation-building project, localization operated within the Taiwanese framework, underscoring the state's support of cultural pluralism and liberal democracy. Those who felt apprehensive with Taiwan's nationalistic project, however, contended that the nation-state has metamorphosed into a neocolonial power in the face of global competition, suppressing its marginal groups in its inner colony.<sup>1</sup> In addition, a third group, mainly "cosmopolitans," contended that globalization phenomenon weakened the power and boundary of the nation-state, and enabled transnational alliances among local groups; thus they argued that Taiwan should discard the obsolete nation-building framework lest it would be "left behind" by the increasingly globalized world.<sup>2</sup>

Taiwan's scholarly debates corresponded to the ongoing discussions of the global/local nexus in Western scholarship. In this chapter I will present a dialogue between the western scholarship and Taiwan's intellectual discourses. I argue that the following factors triggered the proliferation of Taiwan's place-based movement—the transformation of the state power structure, the



global awareness of the importance of place, and the competition between Taiwan and its neighboring countries for monetary and cultural capital. Corresponding to the global shift in valuing locality and difference, a new form of governmentality, which underscores progressiveness, flexibility, and pluralism, has been constituted through extensive programs of community-making and historical/cultural preservation. That said, however, I reject an entirely constructivist view of the sense of place. I suggest that "place" evoked haunting memories and feelings that in the Taiwan context were articulated into a national-cultural discourse; yet they were not fully containable by this discourse.<sup>3</sup> The excesses of place-based attachment were what made "place" such a powerful symbol for social mobilization in post-economic boom Taiwan.

I begin with a presidential speech delivered at a defining moment of Taiwan's political democracy, which highlighted the significance of local cultural manifestations for the nation in the age of globalization. In light of the recent scholarly discussion of the dialectical relationship between globalization and localization, I suggest that the celebration of local cultures as essential to a modern nationhood is a historical product; it needs to be understood in the context of inter-place competition in a global era. To illustrate the point, I explain the parallels between the burgeoning community-making programs in Taiwan and that of Japan, and show how "having a culture" gradually became an imperative for Taiwan to consolidate its nationhood in the international community.

#### REAPPRAISAL OF CULTURE WORKERS BY A TRANSFORMED STATE

Grassroots community organizations have now been developing around the country, working to explore and preserve the history, culture, geography and ecology of their localities. These are all part of Taiwan's culture, whether they are local cultures, mass cultures or high cultures. Due to special historical and geographical factors, Taiwan possesses a wealth of diversified cultural elements. . . . We must open our hearts with tolerance and respect, so that our diverse ethnic groups and different regional cultures communicate with each other, and so that Taiwan's local cultures connect with the cultures of Chinese-speaking communities and other world cultures, and create a new milieu of 'a cultural Taiwan in a modern century.'<sup>4</sup> †

In this inaugural speech given on May 20, 2000, president-elect Chen Shui-Bian praised the contribution that grassroots community workers had made in constructing and consolidating the Taiwanese culture over the past decade. Grassroots culture workers, as Chen acclaimed, operated at the juncture of the global and the local, 'magnifying the specificity of the local

within the global logic of cultural difference. Equipped with its distinctive and pluralistic culture, Taiwan would then be empowered to be an equivalent to other "Chinese-speaking communities and other world cultures." In other words, the cultures that the grassroots workers endeavored to preserve would provide a foundation for Taiwan to obtain international recognition. One might notice the parallel between Chen's appraisal and the statement Stalin made in 1950 regarding the cunning association between culture and nation: "a nation is a stable, historically established community of people, which has a common mentality manifesting itself in the field of culture."<sup>5</sup> Culture in this context is understood as the marker for a nation, the collective manifestation of a national populace. Culture, therefore, can be read as the metonym of the nation in Chen's speech.

Stalin's notion of national culture suffers from a lack of historicity. Conversely, Chen Shui-Bian's speech tells us of the dynamic aspect of culture and heritage in a nation-building context. As Renan reminded us one century ago, "a nation . . . presupposes a past" upon which the national idea is developed.<sup>6</sup> Gellner further elaborated, "It is nationalism which engenders nations, and not the other way round. Admittedly, nationalism uses the pre-existing, historically inherited proliferation of cultures or cultural wealth, though it uses them very selectively, and it most often transforms them radically."<sup>7</sup> "National culture," as well as national heritage, then, is a historically contingent concept derived from a deliberate process of social engineering, willful selection, and invention.<sup>8</sup> Nonetheless, they both need to be narrated as the collective manifestations of "the people" to evoke the public imagination of a shared belonging to the same nation. In Taiwan's context, the term "culture" has had many different connotations throughout history; it was not until the mid-1990s that "culture" became associated with locality, and "having a culture"<sup>9</sup> become a desirable imperative of a locatable populace—be it a township population or an island people. Hence, the question we should probe here is how the historical articulation of culture and local place developed during the 1990s in Taiwan.

When they were first identified in the late 1980s as *zaidi wenshi gongzuozhe* (local cultural and historical workers), it was an unfamiliar notion to the general public that amateur research on local history and culture could be a vocation. Chen Ban, a board member of the National Committee for Community Making (*shequ yingzao weiyuanhui*) and a long-time activist in the Hakka communities of the Hsinchu County, stated in a speech that he was unable to explain his job in a socially recognizable fashion to concerned relatives and neighbors until the mid-1990s, when the term "community-making" (*shequ yingzao*) began to prevail in mass media thanks to the government's aggressive promotion.<sup>10</sup> The major breakthrough in public image, as many workers agreed, occurred during 1994 when the KMT regime, led by the then president Lee Teng-hui, initiated the "Integrated Community-

Making Program." This state-sponsored program prompted a massive scale of participation. Following its implementation local organizations (*zaidi tuan-ti*), including community associations, cultural and historical societies, cultural foundations, and so on, flourished in virtually every corner of the island. Wittingly or unwittingly, their works became a collaborative engineering of "local differences" within the national scope. Their contribution to Taiwanese nationalism was officially recognized after Chen Shui-Bian's electoral victory concluded the last decade of political indigenization.

For a place like Taiwan, where the transformation of the so-called "economic miracle" has pushed many localities into oblivion, the national effort to describe and inscribe local differences may seem belated. From a historical perspective, however, the 1990s were not the first time that the local was brought into public attention in Taiwan. On the academic front, Stevan Harrell and Huang Chun-Chieh noted that "as late as the 1970s, there was still a local rural culture in any Taiwan village, a local culture that both signaled its own position by its parochial nature and proclaimed its uniqueness in the face of similar, but still not identical, cultural traditions in neighboring and more distant communities."<sup>11</sup> Interestingly, it was also during the 1970s that a revisiting of things rural emerged in literary discourse.<sup>12</sup> Triggered by the diplomatic difficulty facing the island after its expulsion from the United Nations in 1971, major newspapers such as *The China Times* began to promote "*baodao wenxue* (in-depth reportage)." In conjunction with the heated movement of *Xiangtu wenxue* (native-soil literature), the writers of *baodao wenxue* believed that literature ought to serve the people by faithfully depicting socio-economic injustice prevailing in the everyday life of many non-urban areas. They also advocated a "national literature," employing vernacular language to portray the lower class, as opposed to the Western-influenced, highbrow modernist literature that was associated primarily with urban intellectuals.<sup>13</sup> In the preface to an important *baodao wenxue* volume, Jiang Xun criticized writers "who promoted 'cosmopolitanism' and 'modernization'" as "in a desperate effort to give up their own national characteristics, assimilating and surrendering to another nation" under the guise of "cosmopolitanism."<sup>14</sup> In short, the local during the 1970s context was portrayed as the opposition to and a potential refuge from western influences.

The popularity of *baodao wenxue* diminished during the 1980s, partly because the writers were divided on the actual content of "the nation." In addition, as the restriction on overseas travel was removed upon the lifting of martial law in 1987, the market demand for literature shifted from domestic reportage to international and cross-strait travel literature. During the 1990s, however, when attention concerning place began to rise again, localism was no longer seen as the resistance site against westernization. Rather, globalizing forces, mainly from the West and Japan, inspired the former. Preservation and revitalization of local cultures corresponded with the rise of multicultur-

alism, which was seen as an essential step toward a liberal democracy and would engender the international acceptance of Taiwan as a progressive nation. Chen Shui-bian was fully aware of the global shift in valuing the local; hence he evaluated Taiwan's burgeoning localism as a bridge to connect the island people with other world citizens.

### GLOBALIZATION AND LOCALIZATION—AN ISSUE FOR CONTESTATION

The presidential speech paralleled scholarly discussions of the dialectics between globalization and localization. Wilson and Dissanayake described the "fractal terrain" at end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as "a new world-space of cultural production and national representation which is simultaneously becoming more globalized (unified around dynamics of capitalistic moving across borders) and more localized (fragmented into contestatory enclaves of difference, coalition, and resistance)." In this context, postmodern culture-workers become the symbolic engineers and critical consciousness of global capital.<sup>15</sup> As with other industrial societies, postmodern discourse was introduced to Taiwan during the late 1980s,<sup>16</sup> yet discussions about globalization and its radical impact on spatial and temporal concepts only emerged in the mid-1990s, mainly triggered by urban-planning and cultural studies intellectuals. Chen Chi-nan in his article entitled "The Globalized Postmodern Condition: On Contemporary Culture and Space" vividly illustrated the transformation of spatial and temporal experiences in postmodern Taiwan:

This is an unprecedented situation that our parents' generation had never experienced: starting from our breakfast table, there are ingredients from all over the world. It used to be difficult to travel overseas; thus the contrast between locality and foreignness was very clear. Yet, now the distinction has been blurred. . . . For those who travel frequently among different countries, it is easy to forget where they are because the landscapes are so similar in every place. Some products are sold in almost every grocery stores. . . . Tradition and local specialty (*difang tese*) have been mostly eliminated or ruined in modern society.

In this placeless era, Chen further argued, local characteristics and attraction actually become more critical than ever.

It is also in the process of global competition for capital that localities and communities, especially the local distinctions in culture and arts, regain a new economic superiority. Along with the breakdown of all the geo-economic barriers, culture, arts, space, place and life, on the contrary, become the most important sites for 'difference.' While the world becomes more uniform and undifferentiated, our demand for

difference becomes more sophisticated. "The era of locality" and "the era of culture" become more and more prominent.<sup>17</sup>

Chen's observation was likely inspired by the notions of "space-time compression" and "flexible capital accumulation" first proposed by David Harvey, who informed us that "the less important the spatial barriers, the greater the sensitivity of capital to the variations of place within space, and the greater the incentive for places to be differentiated in ways attractive to capital."<sup>18</sup> Chen, however, did not adopt the apprehensive and skeptical tone that Harvey held against "place-bound movements." For Harvey, the emergence of place-bound identity was a desperate effort to "search for secure moorings in a shifting world"<sup>19</sup> at moments of uncertainty and disturbance. He dismissed local movements and resistance as "reactionary politics of an aestheticized spatiality,"<sup>20</sup> which could lead to fragmentation, "parochialism, myopia, and self-referentiality in the face of the universalizing force of capital circulation."<sup>21</sup> In other words, regional resistance may be an effective political action, but it cannot become the ultimate agency for a "radical historical change."<sup>22</sup> On several occasions he employed examples of commodification of traditions and museumization of history to illustrate that root-searching efforts often ended up being a profitable process for capital investment.<sup>23</sup> As Kaplan nicely summarized, "Harvey argues that 'place' becomes the locus of social identity, fixing social relations into a static, if seemingly secure, state. Such attachments to 'place-bound identity' may begin as oppositional movements but, Harvey reminds us, they also become part of the 'very fragmentation which a mobile capitalism and flexible accumulation can feed upon.'"<sup>24</sup>

Harvey's argument, derived from his conviction in Marxist metatheory, is countered by the scholars concerned about the political significance of place and locality. Focused on the "continued, and even intensified, sense of locality" in the midst of globalizing changes,<sup>25</sup> they argue for a reconceptualization of the notion of place and locality. They question the binary oppositions of local/global, concrete/abstract, and bounded/flexible that are implicit in Harvey's argument. Localities, from their perspective, "are produced at the intersection of global and local processes."<sup>26</sup> As Massey proposes, locality studies do not amount to fetishization of place; nor do they attempt to impose a fixed and static framework to the place-based identity. Rather, localities "are about the intersection of social activities and social relations [which are] necessarily ...dynamic, changing... They have to be constructed through sets of social relations which bind them inextricably to wider arenas, and other places."<sup>27</sup> In this regard, locality research does not only apply to a geographically specific subject, but can contribute to broader issues.

## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PLACE IN ANTHROPOLOGY

Massy's reconceptualization of locality studies in the face of globalization echoes the recent trend of "getting back into place"<sup>28</sup> in anthropology. According to Appadurai, ethnographers used to take locality "as ground not figure, recognizing neither its fragility nor its ethos as a property of social life."<sup>29</sup> This was because the anthropological discourse presupposed an isomorphism between the scope of a native culture and its geographical location. In anthropological construction "natives" were seen as confined to their culture, which "[was] itself somehow bounded, somehow tied to the circumstantiality of place;"<sup>30</sup> the world was hence mapped into "a series of discrete, territorialized cultures."<sup>31</sup> As globalization, dislocation, and uprootedness become the norm of postmodern life, however, "natives," imagined by anthropologists as "immobilized by their belonging to a place" are rapidly disappearing.<sup>32</sup> Place, once considered to be too opaque and too "natural" to be reflected at the conscious or theoretical level, is now seen as a social construct, a constant creation by a set of socio-spatial relations imbued with power struggles.<sup>33</sup>

Therefore, rather than viewing place as a static entity, anthropologists turn their attention to the process of "place making," investigating how interwoven the concepts of "place," "locality," and "community" are constructed and understood.<sup>34</sup> Based on the long-held disciplinary tradition of highlighting "the alternative," a major portion of research in this thread is associated with the dynamics of power and resistance, in which the local is privileged as "the site of resistance to capital [and] the location for imagining alternative possibilities for the future."<sup>35</sup> For example, Charles O. Frake showed us how rural England is imagined as a sheltered past, the core of English identity, as opposed to the industrialized metropolis;<sup>36</sup> Rosemary J. Coombe portrayed marginalized groups circulating demonic rumors through local (intimate, rooted, informal) networks to counter the hegemonic influence of transnational corporations;<sup>37</sup> Michael Woost's research in Sri Lanka illustrated that local villagers adopt the nationalist ideology as the reference framework of their historical memories to strive for development resources;<sup>38</sup> Lisa Rofel demonstrated that Chinese factory silk workers create "spaces of subversions" by contesting and alternating the settings of their workplace to challenge the cadres' spatial disciplining derived from a dominant ideology of modernity and global economy.<sup>39</sup> As Dirlík pointed out, "advocacy of place" is an objective shared by a wide spectrum of contemporary social movements. Reacting to the threats of monotonous modernization and globalization, the late 20<sup>th</sup> century has witnessed a worldwide irruption of displacement anxiety as well as place consciousness.<sup>40</sup>

## PLACE AND STRUCTURAL NOSTALGIA

Contrary to Harvey's apprehension, Dirlik conceived of place and place-based imagination as a promising basis for a radical politics. "Groundedness," he argued, is crucial to the conceptualization of place. Place as metaphor suggests groundedness and concreteness of everyday existence, controlled by "the weak" within the place rather than the powerful from "those placeless abstractions."<sup>41</sup> Hence, he said, "The struggle for place in the concrete is a struggle against power, and the hegemony of abstractions."<sup>42</sup> Recognizing his own utopianism, Dirlik nonetheless maintained that "places" offer the resolution to amend the modernist "Great Divide" between nature and humanity. In other words, the "place-based imagination" that erupted worldwide in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century signifies a utopian longing for returning to "an impossibly pure context of lived experience in the place of origin," where the divides between nature and culture, authenticity and mediation, do not exist. In my view, Dirlik's defense of place echoes how the mechanism of structural nostalgia works. As Susan Stewart stated, "The point of desire which the nostalgic seeks is in fact the absence that is the very generating mechanism of desire."<sup>43</sup> The past — the irretrievable original moment — is always ideological.

Stewart's reading of nostalgia is illuminating in Taiwan's context. Ever since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the nostalgic Taiwanese intelligentsia has been writing about local (rural) places as "the point of desire" for a pre-colonial origin countering to the modernizing effect brought by various colonial powers. As Rosalind Morris observed, "locality appears after its loss and seems to have been at the place of origins from the start."<sup>44</sup> Thus it is haunting to trace the past that is supposed to take on an authenticity, as the moment of innocence can only live "through narrative."<sup>45</sup> An article written right after the new millennium by Yu Dehui, a prominent scholar in social psychology, is an interesting example as to how nostalgic mechanism works in seeking something that might have never existed. In watching the news report of the successful stories of some Taiwanese businessmen who happily settled and made profits in mainland China, Yu felt disturbed:

To my surprise, the aspects of the mainland living that made those businessmen so fulfilled and overjoyed were actually some "core values" that have already been discarded in Taiwan, such as interpersonal sincerity, good neighborliness, moral life, and even business responsibility and obligation. This discovery really hurt me, because these core values are the soul of a society, *the very attraction of a place*. . . . Taiwan already lose its ultimate value, which will no longer be found in our everyday life, politics, academia, education, entertainment, or commercial fields. No one stole those values; they simply slide away without our least attention . . .

Yu then speculated that in losing the societal anchor, "Taiwan has departed from its 'epoch of redemption' (*jiushu de shidai*), when everything looked hopeful and promising, and sailed to an aimless ocean."<sup>46</sup> What would be the destination of a drifting Taiwan? Yu referred to "the shadow of the Jewish Diasporas" as an indication that losing one's own place may be the ultimate tragedy for the Taiwanese people.

In my view, the most striking point in this article is the nostalgic desire that seeks for one's lost past in an-other land. Furthermore, Yu's nostalgia was triggered by the anxiety and loss prevailing in the post-economic miracle Taiwan.<sup>47</sup> For many investors and business people, the major distinction that made China more attractive are the "traditional values" now lost in Taiwan. Hence Yu's article represents Taiwan's anxiety in the era of "place competition." As Harvey observed, "Those who reside in a place (or who hold the fixed assets of a place) become acutely aware that they are in competition with other places for highly mobile capital. The particular mix of physical and social infrastructures, of labor qualities, of social and political regulation, of cultural and social life on offer (all of which are open to construction) can be more or less attractive to, for example, external capital."<sup>48</sup>

## EAST ASIAN MODERNITY

Harvey's notion of "inter-place competition" is useful in positioning Taiwan's place-based movement in the context of East Asia modernity, where an alternative discourse of civility in the era of global competition has been articulated.<sup>49</sup> I suggest that Taiwan's emerging localism can be seen as reacting to this broader effort.

Ever since 1994, Taiwan has followed a similar fashion to that of Japan in promoting its local revitalization and community-building movements. Intellectuals and state officials frequently used Japan as a reference point for locality construction. Ms. Chen Yuxiu, the current director of the Council for Cultural Affairs (CCA), for example, visited Japan in January 2001 to observe and study their "long history of community development." She announced that the CCA would thoroughly improve its administration of community-building program after her Japan trip; highlighting the "special flavor" (*tese*) of a community through preserving and renovating its historic architecture, as analogous to the Japanese experience of "*machi-tsukuri*" (town/district-making), would be a central affair of the CCA's reoriented policy.<sup>50</sup> In a similar vein, Chen Chi-nan in his article "Let's Pass on the Ilan Experience: on Locality, Culture, and Democracy" maintained:

In Europe, the US, and Japan the local governors see sustainable local environment, beautifying urban landscape, cultivating local attraction, and providing their people elegant living culture as priorities in their campaign platforms. In other words, the more modernized the

area is, the more crucial a functional cultural administration is for the local bureaucracy.<sup>51</sup>

In another article he anticipated the coming of a "new era of localism" (*difang shidai*) and contended, "What we pursue is a 'great country' (*daguo*) with diverse localities and communities; we want a 'great country' with its distinctive characteristics, charms, and creativity, rather than a vulgar, boring economically-minded country."<sup>52</sup>

The term "difang shidai" was first introduced from Japan. Jennifer Robertson explained that "chihoo no jidai" or "the age of localism" was an expression coined during the late 1970s: "In the Meiji period as in the present examples, chihoo was variously defined as the 'opposite of cities' and/or any place outside Tokyo."<sup>53</sup> Equally ubiquitous as chihoo in Japan's cultural industries is the notion of "*furusato* (hometown or native place)." As Ivy described, the notion of *furusato* was discursively established when Japan's rapid economic growth and industrialization caused large-scale transformations of rural villages. Alarmed by the disappearance of their rural roots, urban Japanese began to valorize certain local communities as their generic homeland and the source of true Japanese virtue.<sup>54</sup> *Furusato-zukuri* (hometown-making) projects, which often concentrated on reviving/inventing "traditional" festivals for tourist consumption, have emerged in many villages since the 1970s. Robertson interpreted them as concerted efforts to build a national "'authentic' community in contradistinction to internationalization."<sup>55</sup> The third similar term is "*kyodo*" (native-place).<sup>56</sup> Karen Wigen showed that "native-place" studies emerged in Japan during the late Meiji period as a great contrast to the then overwhelmingly official embracement of Westernization and modernization. She argued that the word *kyodo* must be understood as "a site of reverence as well as recreation and as a locus of devotion as well as development."<sup>57</sup> Although "regional identities do not appeal to all, they remain important themes in the lexicon of Japaneseness." They were appropriated to promote "patriotic sentiment," to resist the "cultural standardization" brought by centralized capital and political power, and to boost local, particularly rural, economies. The tradition of prewar native-place studies transformed into a more professionalized and action-oriented "community studies" during the 1970s "Riding a wave of neonationalism in the 1970s, many Japanese began to focus once again on the virtues of the local."<sup>58</sup>

The above-mentioned scholars all pointed to the economic motivation beneath many of Japan's village-making programs. At the local level, the revaluation of folk tradition matched the need for new revenues of many rural places. The village became the unit for production, its local authenticity the cultural capital for commodification. Implanted in Taiwan's context, this economic motif was even more explicit. During 1995 the Council for

Cultural Affairs first introduced the policy of "Industrialization of Culture, Culturalization of Industry" (*wenhua chanye hua, chanye wenhua hua*) after the leading officials' several learning trips to Japan. The program encouraged local manufacture of cultural products at specific places. Right after the implementation of the program in Taiwan, the Ministry of Economics also planned on an advisory project to assist township industries and businesses marketing their local specialties. I discuss the outcomes of those two projects in detail in chapters four and five.

Thus a sector of Taiwan's 1990s localism paralleled its East Asian counterparts, in particular Japan. In chapter four I present a prominent architectural project led mainly by a Japanese firm, which relocated to Taiwan in pursuit of an authentic rural community. This peculiar connection between Taiwan and Japan in their place-making projects signifies a differential process of modernity between the metropole and its former colony, if we see the rise of local consciousness as associated with "modernity and its loss."<sup>59</sup>

Contrary to the harmonious and mimetic relationship between Taiwan and Japan, the diplomatic interaction across the Taiwan Strait seems to go in an opposite direction. The urge to define a "Taiwanese" culture as distinct from that of the Chinese mainland originally emerged among an elite in political circles during the 1980s. After the opening of the cross-strait traffic the psychological distance between Taiwan and China was ironically polarized, and the urge for a distinctive nationality became a common cause for ordinary citizens. The Chinese threat to invade Taiwan on the claim that it is merely a region of China has only fueled the island's separatism, as the Taiwanese were prompted to find a territorialized cultural background to underscore the sense of political independence. Hence, the re-emergence of localism in Taiwan should not be interpreted solely in terms of the global/local nexus. A third dimension—nationalism—needs to be added to our analytic framework.

## LOCALITY AND NATION-STATE IN THE GLOBAL TERRAIN

Appadurai argued that in the postnational social formation "we are in the process of moving to a global order in which the nation-state has become obsolete and other formations for allegiance and identity have taken its place."<sup>60</sup> As people obtain the freedom to move beyond national boundaries, they interact directly with the global politics and transnational capitalism, without the mediation of the nation-state. In other words, he anticipated a correlation between the weakening of national boundaries and the re-spatialization of locality in the global terrain. However, the reality is that in most places, if not all, both are still in play. There prevails a delicate dance between globalizing forces and the nation-state. Indeed in many countries, globalization fuels a national urge towards preservation of tradition and custom, and

engenders the nation-state to refashion itself in a flexible manner to better accommodate global capital.<sup>61</sup>

Aihwa Ong maintained, "The nation-state—with its supposed monopoly over sovereignty—remains a key institution in structuring spatial order" in an era of globalization.<sup>62</sup> Owing to Taiwan's peculiar geo-political history, and particularly its entanglement with mainland China, the dynamic tension between globalizing energies and the urge to create an ever more robust nation is pronounced and central to the island's daily existence. Under the state's regulation, the outcomes of the miscellaneous local societies are coordinated, appropriated, selected, and re-organized into a singular collectivity—a national place called Taiwan.

What is the connection between locality and nation? Anderson proposes that a nation "is an imagined political community—and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign."<sup>63</sup> Featherstone argues, "Certain places may be enshrined with a particular emblematic status as national monuments and used to represent a form of symbolic bonding which overrides and embodies the various local affiliations."<sup>64</sup> This identity calls for a sacred sensation of belonging for its people. Individual singularity within the group becomes "subsumed into some larger collectivity and appropriate cultural work undertaken to develop an acceptable public face for it through ...mobilization of the repertoire of communal symbols, sentiments, and collective memories."<sup>65</sup>

While Appadurai might have been too rash in making his conclusion that the nation is obsolete, he also noticed the increasing significance of locality in nation-states facing potential destabilization from transnational forces:

The nation-state conducts throughout its territories the bizarrely contradictory project of creating a flat, contiguous, and homogeneous space of nationness and simultaneously a set of places and spaces (prisons, barracks, airports, radio stations, secretariats, parks, marching grounds, processional routes) calculated to create the internal distinctions and divisions necessary for state ceremony, surveillance, discipline, and mobilization.<sup>66</sup>

From this very Foucauldian point of view, "Locality for the modern nation-state is either a site of nationally appropriated nostalgias, celebrations, and commemorations or a necessary condition of the production of nationals."<sup>67</sup>

Appadurai's theorization provides an excellent perspective to analyze the governmentality of the KMT regime before the late 1980s. Some have pointed out the hegemonic spatial technologies exerted by the KMT after 1949, the most ubiquitous case being the replacement of street names with Mainland Chinese provinces and cities in an effort to redraw the nationscape of the island.<sup>68</sup> In addition, rural neighborhoods have been the constant tar-

gets for state surveillance and regulation in the guise of community developmentalism. During the late 1960s, the Taiwan government began its first community development project, sponsored by the United Nations. The objectives were to create uniform, sanitized and modernized model communities out of the previously unruly villages. The community project implemented at that time was crucial to Taiwan's miraculous economic advancement in the 1970s.

However, anyone familiar with Taiwan's contemporary politics would point out that the KMT's China-oriented nation-building project has been superseded by an entirely different vision. Starting from the early 1990s, Taiwan has undergone a radical process to rebuild its nationality, led by the first president-elected Lee Teng-hui. A new community building endeavor was advanced by the state at the same time. Burgeoning community organizations were a result of this conscious and aggressive advancement, yet the state was no longer capable of fully containing the proliferating localities.

Featherstone suggested that the sense of locality "will tend to become sharpened and more well-defined when the locality becomes locked into power struggles and elimination contests with its neighbors. In such situation we can see the formation of a local culture in which the particularity of its own identity is emphasized."<sup>69</sup> In light of his argument, Taiwan's localism manifested a departure from the historical and cultural China that was imposed by the KMT and later the PRC. Local place was conflated to the very core of a non-Chinese nation; the manifestation of local diversity, moreover, became the measurement of "progress," demarcating an enlightened, democratic, Taiwan—thus contrasting the politically and culturally oppressive China—and enhancing Taiwan's competitiveness in attracting global capital and human resources. Hence I maintain that the proliferation of localities in Taiwan was tied to its new code of national sovereignty; the spectrum of "local cultures" was discursively constructed and celebrated as a proof of cultural pluralism for the nation-state to validate itself as a modern, progressive, subject.

#### SPACES OF HOPE<sup>70</sup>

A new form of "governmentality," highlighting the notions of diversity, cultural pluralism, and progress, emerged in the 1990s Taiwan through concerted endeavors of the state and cultural industries to articulate "local differences" into a national-cultural discourse. Nonetheless, to argue that all the localities are constructed would be inaccurate. As Rosalind Morris illuminated, such argument is another way of reifying the totality and universality of modernity. In conducting my research on the place-making and sense of belonging in Taiwan, I found that the discursive formulation of local differences usually predicated on some experiential, unnamable and elusive, place-based attachments. It is as if the pre-figurative attachments prevailed in every

place throughout Taiwan, anticipating the emergence of a pluralist state discourse. In light of Appadurai, the attachments and memories that local people have—their sentiment and familiarity with the streetscapes, street names, and local spots — are often more pressing than the influence of the nation-state project; they are “a perennial source of entropy and slippage” and often result in an awkward relationship between the nation-state and the local communities, as the excesses of desires and feelings could challenge the “generalizable mode of belonging to a wider territorial imaginary” that the nation-state strives to regulate.<sup>71</sup>

I remember one conversation that I had with a community activist in Baimi, where a “folk tradition” was invented and manipulated as a source for economic revenue. Under the starry sky this person, a major advocate of their community industry and fully aware of its invented nature, pointed to the ground

There is something that you [as an outsider] would never be able to experience, despite your genuine effort to assist and participate in the developmental projects of this community. Look at this courtyard, you might think it is just a plain courtyard; for me however, it is the place where I was raised. We used to play here as kids; I still remember what have happened to my childhood friends and me in every inch of this land. This memory is indeed the real motivation for me to proceed the community affairs.

In a similar tone, Bachelard elegantly portrayed the relationship between place, memory, and identity in his *Poetics of Space*:

All really inhabited space bears the essence of the notion of home. [Here] memory and imagination remain associated, each one working for their mutual deepening. In the order of values, they both constitute a community of memory and image. Thus the house is not experienced from day to day only, on the thread of a narrative, or in the telling of our own story. Through dreams the various dwelling places in our lives co-penetrate and retain the treasures of former days. . . . The house is one of the greatest powers of integration for the thoughts, memories and dreams of mankind. . . . Without it, man would be a dispersed being.<sup>72</sup>

Harvey follows, “The preservation or construction of a sense of place is then an active moment in the passage from memory to hope, from past to future. And the reconstruction of places can reveal hidden memories that hold out the prospects for different futures.”<sup>73</sup> In the following chapters we will see how this utopian localism worked in Tanshui, Ilan, and Baimi. In each case vernacular traditions and icons of place were invoked through narratives, architecture, and tourism to restore a socio-cultural continuation that

supposedly existed before the intervention of the KMT regime and commodity economy. Their manifestations reflected a critical evaluation of Taiwan’s predominant model of unlimited growth, pleading an alternative trajectory out of the grimy, alienating, present condition. Nonetheless, as we will see, this utopian desire for a wholesome dwelling was often misappropriated by capitalist logic, in which the symbols of place were rendered into commodities available for mass consumption and circulation.<sup>74</sup>

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> A good example is Kuan-Hsing Chen, “The Imperialist Eye: The Cultural Imaginary of a Subempire and a Nation-state” *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique* 8, no.1 (2000), 9–76.

<sup>2</sup> For example, You Changshan, “Meiyou zaidihua, quanqiu hua jiu bu zhenshi” [Globalization is not Realized without Localization], *Tien-hsia Magazine*, no. 231 (2000).

<sup>3</sup> My idea was inspired by Marilyn Ivy. In her book *The Discourses of the Vanishing*, Ivy explains how Japan’s cultural industries re-inscribe the “lost” local differences into a national-cultural discourse of modernity and loss. Ivy argues that the “folk tradition” is neither a pre-discursive event nor entirely constructed by discourse. Rather, the relationship between the “lost” origin and the discourse is “phantasmatic.” While the emotional content of place-based attachment is, in my view, different from the ghostly feeling evoked by the elusive folk tradition, I suggest that the connection between place-based sentiments and the discourse of place is quite phantasmatic, if phantasm is understood as “an epistemological object whose presence or absence cannot be definitively located.” See Ivy, *The Discourses of the Vanishing*, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1995), 22.

<sup>4</sup> “Taiwan Stands Up: Toward the Dawn of a Rising Era,” delivered by Chen Shui-bian as the 10<sup>th</sup> Presidential Inaugural Speech, May 20, 2000.

<sup>5</sup> Quoted from Eric Kierans W. *Globalism and the Nation-state*, (Montreal: CBC Enterprises/les Entreprises Radio-Canada, 1984).

<sup>6</sup> Ernest Renan, “What Is a Nation?” in Geoff Eley and Ronald Grigor Suny eds., *Becoming National*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 42–56.

<sup>7</sup> Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), 55.

<sup>8</sup> This idea, of course, originated from Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Richard Handler, “On Having a Culture: Nationalism and the Preservation of Quebec’s Patrimoine,” in George W. Stocking, Jr., ed., *Objects and Other: Essays on Museums and Material Culture* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985).

<sup>10</sup> Chen Ban, “Wenhua gongzuo shi yizhong shenghuo xingshi” [Cultural Work is a Way of Life], in *Zaidi de huaduo: taiwan zaidi wenshi gongzuo yantaohui lunwenji* [Essay Collection of the Conference on Taiwan’s Local Cultural and Historical Workers], (Sun Moon Lake, Nantou County, Taiwan, April 24–26, 1998).

<sup>11</sup> Stevan Harrell and Huang Chun-chieh, eds., *Cultural Change in Postwar Taiwan* (Boulder, San Francisco, Oxford: Westview Press, 1994).

<sup>12</sup> Jim Hwang also notes similar interests of architects and artists devoted to " 'native soil' culture" during the 1970s. See Hwang, "Mirrors of History," *Taipei Review* (January 2001), 5.

<sup>13</sup> For a detail account of the debate between nativist literature and modernist literature in 1970s Taiwan, see Yvonne Sung-sheng Chang, *Modernism and the Nativist Resistance: Contemporary Chinese Fiction from Taiwan* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), and "Literature in Post-1949 Taiwan," in Murray Rubinstein, ed., *Taiwan: A New History*, (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1999). She marks 1979, when several prominent writers got involved in political protests, as the beginning of the decline of Taiwan's nativist literature. I should add here that the writers' participation in politics aggravated the division between those who held different understandings of the nation.

<sup>14</sup> Jiang Xun, "Preface," in Ma Yigong, *Xunzhao Lao Taiwan* (Taipei: China Times Publications, 1971), 4–5.

<sup>15</sup> Rob Wilson and Wilmal Dissanayake, eds., *Global/local: Cultural Production and the Transnational Imaginary* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), 1.

<sup>16</sup> In 1988 *Dangdai* (Con-temporary) magazine published a special issue on post-modernism, which triggered a series of discussions of postmodernism in Taiwan's literature circle. Then in 1989 Frederic Jameson visited Taiwan and aroused "*Zhan Minxin Xuanfeng* (whirlwind of Jameson)," which involved roundtables, conferences, translations, etc. in the following years.

<sup>17</sup> Chen Chi-nan, "Quanqiu hua de houxiandai qingjing: jin shi jin ri de wenhua yu kongjian" [The Globalized Postmodern Condition: On Contemporary Culture and Space], <http://www.ceformosa.org.tw>, October 2000, emphasis added.

<sup>18</sup> David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry Into the Origins of Cultural Change*. (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1989), 295–6.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 302.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 305. I found the quote from Meaghan Morris, "The Man in the Mirror: Harvey's 'Condition' of Postmodernity," *Theory, Culture, and Society*, 9, no.1 (1992), 253–279.

<sup>21</sup> Harvey, 351.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 305.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 303.

<sup>24</sup> Caren Kaplan, *Questions of Travel*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), 151.

<sup>25</sup> Linda McDowell, *Gender, Identity, & Place: Understanding Feminist Geographies* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 3.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>27</sup> Doreen Massey, *Space, Place, and Gender* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1994), 136–42.

<sup>28</sup> Edward S. Casey, *Getting back into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993).

<sup>29</sup> Appadurai, *Modernity at Large*, 182, emphasis original.

<sup>30</sup> Arjun Appadurai, "Putting Hierarch in Its Place," *Cultural Anthropology*, 3 (1988), 38.

<sup>31</sup> Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson, eds., *Culture, Power, Place: Explorations in Critical Anthropology*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), 3.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>33</sup> For example, Appadurai, *Modernity at Large*; James Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997); Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson, eds., *Cultural, Power, Place*; Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson, eds. *Anthropological Locations: Boundaries and Grounds of a Field Science* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Akhil Gupta *Postcolonial Developments* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998); Kaplan, *Questions of Travel*; Massey, *Space, Place and Gender*; McDowell, *Gender, Identity, & Place: Understanding Feminist Geographies*.

<sup>34</sup> Steven Feld and Keith H. Basso, eds., *Senses of Place* (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 1996); Gupta, *Postcolonial Developments*; Nadia Lovell, *Locality and Belonging* (London: Routledge, 1998); Charles Rutheiser, "Making Place in the Nonplace Urban Realm: Notes on the Revitalization of Downtown Atlanta." *Urban Anthropology* 26, no.1 (1997), 9–42.

<sup>35</sup> Wilson and Dissanayake, 22. Also compare Caren Kaplan's similar observation of "Euro-American feminist theories" in Kaplan, 146.

<sup>36</sup> Charles O. Frake "Pleasant Places, Past Times, and Sheltered Identity in Rural East," in Feld and Basso, 229–258.

<sup>37</sup> Rosemary J. Coombe, "The Demonic Place of the 'Not There': Trademark Rumors in the Postindustrial Imaginary," in Gupta and Ferguson, *Culture, Power, Place*, 249–276.

<sup>38</sup> Michael D. Woost, "Nationalizing the Local Past in Sri Lanka: Histories of nation and development in a Sinhalese Village," *American Ethnologist* 20, no.3 (1993), 502–521.

<sup>39</sup> Lisa Rofel "Rethinking Modernity: Space and Factory Discipline," in *Other Modernities: Gendered Yearnings in China after Socialism*, (University of California Press, 1999), 257–276.

<sup>40</sup> Arif Dirlik, "The Global in the Local," in Wilson and Dissanayake, 21–45.

<sup>41</sup> Arif Dirlik, "Place-based Imagination: Globalism and the Politics of Place," *Review XXII*, 2 (1999), 155.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), 23.

<sup>44</sup> Rosalind Morris *In the Place of Origins: Modernity and its Mediums in Northern Thailand*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), 245.

<sup>45</sup> Stewart, 23.

<sup>46</sup> Yu Dehui, "Zhongjie zhimin dongli, yingjie piaolang niandai?" [Is the Ending of Colonial Dynamics the Beginning of Diasporic years?], *China Times Inter@ctive*, <http://news.chinatimes.com/news/papers/online/forum/c9011540.htm>, January 15, 2001, emphasis added.

<sup>47</sup> Referred to Nickola Pazderic, *Success and Failure in Post-Miracle Taiwan*, Ph.D. Dissertation (Seattle: University of Washington, 1999).

<sup>48</sup> David Harvey, *Justice, Nature & the Geography of Difference* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1996), 297–8.

<sup>49</sup> Aihwa Ong, *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999). Read especially her critiques on Huntington's theory of "clashes of civilizations" in the chapters "Saying No to the West" and "Zones of New Sovereignty."



<sup>50</sup> Yu Guohua, "Shequ yingzao zhanzai guanjian shijiandian [This is the Crucial Moment for Community-Making Movement]." <http://www.ceformosa.org.tw>, January 19, 2001.

<sup>51</sup> Chen Chi-nan, "Rang ilan jingyan chuandi kailai: Tan difang wenhua yu minzhu zhengzhi [Let's Disseminate the Ilan Experience: On Local place, Culture, and Democratic Politics]," <http://www.ceformosa.org.tw>, January 2001.

<sup>52</sup> Chen Chi-nan, "Kaiqi xinde difang shidai [Opening a New Era of Locality]," <http://www.ceformosa.org.tw>, April 9, 1997.

<sup>53</sup> Jennifer Robertson, *Native and Newcomer: Making and Remaking a Japanese City* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 23–5.

<sup>54</sup> Ivy, 100–108.

<sup>55</sup> Robertson, 28.

<sup>56</sup> Furusato and kyodo have same literal meanings and are both translated as "homeland" or "native place." Yet Marilyn Ivy argues that those two terms have different connotations in social context, by selectively adopting Chinese characters. See Ivy, 20.

<sup>57</sup> Karen Wigen, "Politics and piety in Japanese native-place studies: The rhetoric of solidarity in Shinano," *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique* 4, no.3 (1996), 512–560.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 548.

<sup>59</sup> Drawn from Ivy, 1.

<sup>60</sup> Appadurai, *Modernity at Large*, 168–9.

<sup>61</sup> Examples include Chen Kuan-hsing and Aihwa Ong's works.

<sup>62</sup> Aihwa Ong, 215.

<sup>63</sup> Benedict R. O'Gorman Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991).

<sup>64</sup> Mike Featherstone, "Localism, Globalism and Cultural Identity," in Wilson and Dissanayake, 53.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

<sup>66</sup> Appadurai, *Modernity at Large*, 189.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>68</sup> Ching-wen Hsu, "Homeland/Otherland: A Street Map of Taiwan," paper presented at the American Anthropological Association Convention, November 23, 1999. Also see Marshall Johnson, "Making Times: Historic Preservation and the Space of Nationality," *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique* 3, no.2 (1994), 177–249.

<sup>69</sup> Featherstone, 54–55.

<sup>70</sup> Title drawn from David Harvey's latest book, *Spaces of Hope*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

<sup>71</sup> Appadurai, *Modernity at Large*, 189–90.

<sup>72</sup> Cited from Harvey, *Justice, Geography of differences*, 304–5.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 306.

<sup>74</sup> Compare Arif Dirlik, "Place-based Imagination: Globalism and the Politics of Place."

## THE EMERGENCE OF LOCAL CULTURE

Throughout, I treat culture as a contingent scheme of meanings tied to power dynamics, and I rigorously problematize even 'natives' claims about their 'own' culture, since apprehension, ownership, and representation are practices embedded in strategies of positioning, control, and maneuver. I go beyond simple claims about the nonessentialized nature of culture, to show that culture-making involves not only processes of othering by dominant players but also processes of cultural self-theorizing and re-envisioning in relation to fluid power dynamics, whether at the level of interpersonal relations or at the level of national politics and geopolitical posturing.

Aihwa Ong, *Flexible Citizenship*

**T**HE RISE OF 'LOCAL AUTONOMY' (*DIFANG ZHUTIXING*) IS THE MOST NOTEWORTHY phenomenon in Taiwan's postwar cultural development," declares an evaluation report entitled "Ideal and Practice of Cultural Development of the Counties and Cities in Taiwan."<sup>1</sup> In the preface it is pointed out that the focus of the contemporary cultural policy of Taiwan has shifted "from the center to the local." "Local place" (*difang*), it says, "is the field where people conduct their real life; thus it ought to be the primary focus of cultural administration." Cultural institutions should be grounded in local places, "cultivating the sense of citizenship (*gongmin yishi*) and promoting cultural industries;" only then will Taiwan become a "lively, powerful, cultural country (*wenhua daguo*)."<sup>2</sup>

This report, which nicely summarizes the reforms of Taiwan's cultural administrations during the 1990s, was drafted by a research team supervised by Chen Chi-nan. Chen received his doctorate in cultural anthropology from Yale University and taught in Hong Kong and Singapore. Encouraged by for-

mer President Lee Teng-hui, Chen concluded his overseas career and returned to Taiwan during 1993. He was first appointed to be an advisor of the Council for Cultural Affairs; one year later he became its Deputy Director. His appointment by the highest institution of cultural administration engendered a sweeping transformation of Taiwan's cultural policy, a change that had been brewing during the previous political turmoil but was only realized through Chen's strong-willed execution.

This chapter concerns a historical narrative of Taiwan's cultural transformations during the 1990s, which engendered the proliferation of local cultural and historical societies. In particular, I focus on two major policy changes – the reorientation of cultural policy towards local-based programs, and the curriculum reform of secondary-school history and social studies courses. In describing the historical events involved in the “quiet revolution” within the domain of culture, I do not take a linear approach. Rather than presenting Taiwan's cultural transformation as a thoroughly successful and cohesive project, I highlight the “noises” which arose from miscellaneous groups. This incoherent picture in itself suggests that the notion of nation as an integral unity is indeed an imagination derived from a specific historical context.<sup>3</sup> What may be more common in actual nation-building projects are incomplete, incoherent, and differential processes. Based on my observation of public events, I also illustrate the oft-existing discrepancies between elite and the public in their understandings of the national trajectories. Nonetheless, the miscellaneous voices are often sanitized and appropriated into a beautiful picture of the “national culture.”

I begin with a description of the political swings from the late 1980s to the mid-1990s, a peculiar combination of political democratization and an ethnic nationalism in favor of Hoklo politicians,<sup>4</sup> which set up a favorable environment for cultural nativism. I then trace the cultural policy back to the 1960s, when it served to carry through the will of a totalitarian regime that viewed itself as the heir of a Chinese orthodoxy. The major breakthrough of cultural policy occurred in 1994, when the Council for Cultural Affairs launched its “Integrated Community-Making Program;” “local cultures” were celebrated through the National Festivals of Culture and Arts. Correlating to the reorientation of cultural administration, the education system also experienced radical changes during the mid-1990s. Historical textbooks were rewritten to promote a Taiwan-centered history; a new code of national heritage was constituted through public school curriculum. Finally I discuss how the changes of cultural and educational policy cultivated a fertile ground for local cultural and historical societies to prosper.

### CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION IN THE 1990S TAIWAN

The 1990s cultural transformation of Taiwan occurred at a historical juncture of two social forces – the rise of a popular ethnic nationalism and the surfac-

ing middle-class discontent with the negative outcomes from the previous period of industrialization. The trend of “Taiwanization”<sup>5</sup> or “the quest for a unique Taiwan identity”<sup>6</sup> was strengthened with the rise of “dangwai (anti-KMT)” activists during the 1980s, who opposed the “Mandarinization” imposed by the mainlander-controlled KMT party-state to establish hegemony over the island's native population. Murray Rubinstein contended that the dramatic shift occurred between 1991 and 1994; KMT chairman Lee Teng-hui, a Taiwan-born Hoklo speaker,<sup>7</sup> initiated a series of policy changes and guaranteed a thorough Taiwanization of the KMT regime.<sup>8</sup> This quiet political revolution created a favorable condition for a Taiwanese popular culture to rise. The quest for an independent national identity became widely shared by the Hoklo population – the biggest ethnic group in Taiwan—during the 1990s.<sup>9</sup>

Gold and Bosco both observed the changes of Taiwan's popular culture after the late 1980s in the areas of language, religion, arts, and entertainment.<sup>10</sup> In terms of language, Hoklo was no longer prohibited in the public sphere. On the contrary, Hoklo became the dominant language in some sectors such as small businesses and radio call-in shows. Moreover, while Mandarin was still the official language and the most-commonly used language in daily life, the style with which it was spoken changed. The Southern accent (or minnan accent) became widely recognized as the standardized enunciation while the previous “standard” – Northern-accented Mandarin, often became the object for mockery in TV shows, or even worse, the marker of Chinese immigrant workers. A friend of mine, a Ph.D. student from the University of Chicago, went back to Taiwan during the summer of 1992 after five years of overseas residence. Although born into a Hoklo family, he had been well trained in public speaking and could typically fool people with his standard Beijing accent. Thus people often mistook him as a “guest worker” from mainland China. Having been out of the country during the period when Taiwan's most dramatic linguistic changes occurred, he was puzzled to people's sour reaction to his mandarin accent; years ago he received nothing but compliments.

In addition to language, the public opinion regarding aesthetics changed also: after decades of favor, Chinese high-culture was superseded by “the Taiwanese style.”<sup>11</sup> In the antique market, the focus shifted from Chinese high-art to Taiwanese or local collectibles. Folk artists previously evaluated on a lower rank were suddenly awarded national prizes. The puppet master Li Tianlu was the best example. He was named as a “living national treasure” in 1989, an honor that he would not have dreamed of before when he performed on the rural outdoor stages (*yetai*).

The metamorphosis of Taiwan's ethnic politics, however, cannot fully account for the burgeoning of local cultural activities during the 1990s. While the disappearance of cultural differences between villages, and between rural

and urban seemed only a matter of time, as Harrell and Huang observed,<sup>12</sup> that very inevitability merely intensified the anxiety and effort of educated people to salvage localities from the homogenizing impact of modernization. Nick Pazderic in his research on Taiwan's middle class mentality indicated that a sense of loss, infiltrating in the "technological transformation of Taiwan," underscores the nostalgia for a return to what had been dismantled. This longing "remains inseparable from the realm of spirits."<sup>13</sup> The "repeated call for 'spiritual (jingshen)' renewal," as Pazderic described, finds expression in various forms of middle class activities – e.g. book clubs and healing practices—which attempt to bring culture back to life.

The intellectual lamentation on the loss as a cost of industrialization manifested in a national discussion of the "disappearance of folk tradition." Folk tradition had been perceived as "a less conscious, less systematic tradition that grows out of the everyday life of the villages and (to a lesser extent) old urban neighborhoods where the postwar social and cultural transformations have proceeded most slowly."<sup>14</sup> It had been viewed as an indication of an authentic social consciousness existing prior to the modernization process. In contemporary Taiwan the wealth effect in the rural areas has transformed the folk tradition in a radical, often commodified fashion, causing "a disturbing feeling" among intellectuals. Huang Chun-chieh, for example, interpreted the "loss of folk tradition" as "the shift [to a] 'modern capitalist mentality of profit-oriented individualism' without a clear rudder of cultural values."<sup>15</sup> This loss of a genuine, pre-modern folk tradition as expressed in commercialized religious rituals and festival performance, however, did not seem to concern the less educated crowd, as David K. Jordan observed.<sup>16</sup> Thus, it became an urgent task for the Taiwan intelligentsia to reform or refine the popular culture at the most local level.

Unsurprisingly, Taiwan's cultural problems were often attributed to its multiple-layered colonial history in which the consecutive foreign forces supposedly never attempted to implement any far-fetching policy beneficial to the island. In her book *Taiwan Wenhua Duanceng (The Ruptured Taiwanese Culture)*, Huang Mei-ying contended that the "numerous disharmonies and chaos in Taiwan's societal culture reflect the fraud of its postwar educational and cultural policies."<sup>17</sup> She summarized two problems of Taiwan's cultural education: First, the course content was "alienated from Taiwan's native soil (*bentu*).<sup>18</sup> Vernaculars and native customs had not been included in the curriculum. Second, cultural policy was never "rooted." Cultural activities only served the elite and were not shared by the masses.

Published in 1990, Huang's comment was a typical cultural criticism produced by the intelligentsia at that time. After the abolishment of the martial law in 1987 and the subsequent turbulent years of social movements, the intellectuals gradually shifted their attention from the political sphere to cultural problems during the early 1990s. Du Zhengsheng, a research fellow in

the Institute of Modern History at the Academia Sinica, lamented on the loss of Taiwan's original landscape in his book *Taiwan Xin Taiwan Hun (The Heart of Taiwan, the Soul of Taiwan)*. His family took a road trip from Taipei to Kaohsiung through the west coastal highway, anticipating enjoyable scenery. Yet the trip turned out to be a big disappointment, as they witnessed reckless destructions caused by unregulated development of the previously pristine places along the road. He lamented, "Taiwan's economic boom brought unprecedented transformation to our natural environment" and wrecked its beauty.<sup>18</sup> As for cultural landscape, the island's rapid modernization in the past thirty years yielded widespread, faceless architecture. The original diversity and subtlety of Taiwan's landscape was lost, replaced by "lifeless, pale concrete buildings" and "vulgar and gaudy temples."<sup>19</sup> Du maintained that aestheticism of cultural landscape reflects a nation's strength. Thus he concluded that Taiwan's society was sick due to a severe lack of cultural consciousness. Why is Taiwan lacking a decent culture? Both Du and Huang argued that the constant ruptures of Taiwan's cultural heritage, as the outcome of the consecutive outside rulers, impeded Taiwan from developing a respectable culture.<sup>20</sup>

The anxiety over Taiwan's cultural backwardness is indeed a recurrent theme throughout its modern intellectual history. The notion that Taiwanese culture needed to be improved by social reform to catch up with the advanced countries first occurred in intellectual discourse during the 1920s and has gone through several incarnations. How the 1990s version differed, then, was in the nativist sentiment attached to such cultural criticism. Unlike the similar discussion during the early stage of the 20th century, when modernization, as learning from other "civilized countries," was seen as the remedy to heal and elevate the backwardness of Taiwanese culture, the 1990s intellectuals believed that the real problem lay in the deaths of their own heritage. As Du and other scholars contended, the island's strength was once reassured by its "original beauty," even if such can today only be imagined as the pole to reality. Hence, recovering and preserving the pre-modern cultural diversity became the primary mission for the cultural reconstruction in 1990s Taiwan.

Nationalism and the post-modern/post-industrial longing for cultural authenticity thus converged, initiating a revolutionary change in the governmental domain of cultural politics during the 1990s. In the subsequent sections I employ a historical lens to examine the changes that have occurred in cultural policy. After the mid-1990s, the governmental administrations of culture began moving in a favorable direction for the proliferation of local societies. The significant increase of government aid to community programs as well as the curriculum changes in favoring "native-land education (*xiangtu jiaoxue*)," were two major trends aiding localities in efforts to re-create themselves.

## CULTURAL POLICY IN TAIWAN BEFORE THE 1990S

To understand the scope and significance of the 1990s reforms in cultural policy, it is useful to sketch governmental administrations of culture in earlier times. Similar to many other post-colonial countries, the cultural affairs of postwar Taiwan were first governed on a nationalistic and de-colonizing principle. During the 1950s and 1960s, the primary objective of the KMT administration was to replace the previous fifty years of Japanese influence with the legacy of the Republican China. As Allen Chun demonstrated, the KMT implemented a massive-scale cultural mobilization in attempting "to naturalize the imagination of a Chinese nation-state." Relying mainly on an imagined prehistoric "*Yanhuang*" origin and operating through a resurgent Confucian ethics, the older KMT regime constructed a "traditional Chinese culture" to defend its political legitimacy against the communist China. Its devices included the "Chinese cultural renaissance movement," the mandatory mandarin language policy exercised in schools and entertainment businesses, and the public-school civil education curriculum (*gongmin yu daode*, literal meaning "Citizenship and Morals"). Most policies were executed in a disciplining and highly controlling fashion.<sup>21</sup>

In 1966, triggered by the eruption of the Cultural Revolution in mainland China, the KMT designated November 12, the birthday of the "national father" Sun Yat-sen, as "Cultural Renaissance Day." The following year "the Chinese Cultural Renaissance Movement Promotion Committee" was established, instructed by the Standing Committee of the KMT and chaired by president Chiang Kai-shek.

Chiang declared in its opening ceremony,

To revive the Chinese culture is a fight against the villainous scheme set by the bandit Mao. Under the great banner of Chinese culture, we wish to call out a battle against totalitarianism, barbarianism, evil, and darkness. I believe that liberalism, civilization, morality and brightness will eventually win the victory.<sup>22</sup>

Chiang also claimed that the ultimate goal of the cultural renaissance movement was to "recover the mainland and give freedom to our [Chinese] people." Based on his guidelines, every secondary school was obliged to formulate a "Chinese Cultural Renaissance Movement Promotion and Strengthening National Education Committee" on campus. Its committee members were chosen from faculty and administrators; qualifications included "firm belief in the Three People's Principles, insistence on anti-Communism, loyalty to the country, and deep understanding of the Chinese national culture and spirit."<sup>23</sup> The campus Committee supervised classroom activities and required teachers to supplement materials relevant to "loyalty and filial piety (*zhong xiao*)" into their curricula. The committee was also

responsible to guide student organizations to implement the values of "cultural renaissance" into their extracurricular activities. Also included was the "mandarin only" movement. Ethic codes were set up to ensure that students spoke mandarin only in school. Various competitions, such as speech and composition contests, were held to encourage students to refine their command of mandarin.

In 1970 the Ministry of the Interior announced the "Standards of Public Decorum" (*guomin liyi xuzhi*) and ordered schools of all levels to adopt them in their civil and moral education. The Standards included instructions of personal conducts during the mandated daily flag-raising ceremony; students were required to sing the national anthem, salute to the national flag of the Republic of China, and bow to the pictures of their national leaders – the "national father" Dr. Sun Yat-sen and president Chiang Kai-shek. Proper fashions of mundane behaviors—such as eating, clothing, and greetings – were also dictated. Moreover, the Standards instructed the proper procedures for annual offerings to Confucius; it emphasized the necessity for teachers and students to participate in the annual Confucius commemoration on September 28.

Another significant institution for cultural promotion during this period was the public school curricula. In 1950, the Taiwan Provincial Department of Education formulated the "Implementation Rules of Education Guidelines"; the Ministry of Education also promulgated a set of "Implementation Guidelines for Nation-Building Education" during the Cultural Revolution period.<sup>24</sup> These Guidelines were followed by textbook writers; eventually the Ministry of Education, instructed by Chiang Kai-shek, took charge of textbook production for all the elementary and secondary schools. The historical transitions of the educational system are addressed in later sections. In general, between the 1950s and the early 1970s the KMT government operated in a Foucauldian model of discipline to produce proper and docile "Chinese subjects."

## TRANSITIONAL PERIOD

The conceptual framework for the cultural renaissance movement was replaced by the notion of cultural development in 1981. In his "Twelve National Constructions" (*shier xiang guojia jianshe*) President Chiang Ching-kuo recommended the establishment of the Committee of Cultural Planning and Development (*wenhua jianshe weiyuanhui*, later translated as "the Council for Cultural Affairs"). Subsequently, county-level cultural centers (*wenhua zhongxin*) were initiated to "organize and promote cultural activities."<sup>25</sup> During this period of time, local cultures were promoted as branches of a grand Chinese tradition. Chun argued that this cultural transition coincided with the emergence of "the culture industry" in Taiwan along with the island's tremendous economic growth.<sup>26</sup>

It should be noted that the KMT regime was already experiencing hidden, subtle, yet persistent power shifts during the 1970s and 80s; more and more Taiwan-born politicians were promoted to its power core. Therefore the political rhetoric became a delicate topic during this period. It often contained clever linguistic manipulations. Catchwords such as "Chinese culture" had contingent connotations; they may not have signified *the Chinese culture* at all, depending on the contexts in which they were used.

For example, during his tenures as the Taipei Mayor and later as the Chair of the Taiwan Provincial Government during the late 1970s, Lee Teng-hui held arts festivals to celebrate vernacular cultures, such as Taiwan's opera "Koa'hi," Hoklo and Hakka folksongs, and indigenous performances. He declared that by engaging the island's different groups the audience could learn about different cultures, which would be the first step towards the consolidation of a "cultural China."<sup>27</sup> In 1988 Lee Teng-hui was sworn in as the first Taiwan-born president of the island; yet his power was still on shaky ground and thus he used China and Taiwan interchangeably in an extremely cautious fashion. In 1991 Lee delivered a speech at the annual convention of the renamed "Chinese Cultural Renaissance Association," which he chaired. He declared, "In order to revive the Chinese culture, we should start from the grassroots level." Under the disguise of "reviving the Chinese culture," Lee soon began to modify the mission of the association. He made a series of speeches to highlight the importance of cultural construction at the local level. In a proposal written in April 1992, the Association claimed that its rich resources would be devoted to the construction and promotion of local, "native," cultures. Its biweekly "the Running Water" (*Huoshui*) would be distributed to local leaders, including heads of villages and precincts, and community associations. Also around this time, the Ministry of the Interior altered its regulation of community associations. Under the new rule, each village or precinct was entitled to form one community development committee, whose members were to be elected by the residents of that specific region.<sup>28</sup> All these moderate changes set the stage for the radical reform during 1994, when the scope of the state cultural administration was re-oriented from an imaginary China toward the concrete local.

## THE RISE OF COMMUNITY CULTURE

On March 31, 1994, Lee Teng-hui told the Japanese journalist Ryotaro Shiba that the KMT was a foreign regime (*wailai zhengquan*). In this infamous interview, Lee remarked on the "misery of being a Taiwanese" (*zuowei taiwanren de beiai*); the sadness, he exclaimed, derived from the historical experience of the majority of Taiwanese population being ruled by a small group of mainlanders who never viewed the island as home. Despite the conspicuous flaw of this commentary (the KMT was dominated by Hoklo politicians by 1994), Lee's lamentation characterized a historical memory of the ethnic tension

between native Taiwanese and the "mainlanders," the latter meaning the first and second generations of those who fled to Taiwan with Chiang Kai-shek around 1949.

Ethnic politics had been the Achilles' heel of the KMT before 1994. At that point it carried the stigma of being "the mainlanders' party" even if native Taiwanese members were actually in charge of its power core. Although the ethnic tension between native Taiwanese and mainlanders was fading during the 1990s, the then opposition party, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), continued to play the "ethnic identity card"<sup>29</sup> to its political profit. Under the DPP's challenge, the KMT faced difficulty in transforming its image of being an outside, thus inauthentic, power. Furthermore, the so-called "non-mainstream" members of the KMT, almost all of mainland Chinese descent, criticized the Taiwanization process that Lee was implicitly leading. Eventually they left the KMT and organized the "New Party." The potential polarization of popular votes along ethnic lines threatened to split a significant portion of the KMT votes. When it became certain in 1993 that Lee would campaign in Taiwan's first popular presidential election against the other two parties, the KMT needed a catchword to transcend the highly charged atmosphere. The notion of "community" therefore came into play.

Lee Teng-hui began to promote the notion in 1993 that Taiwan is a "living community" (*shengming gongtongti*), and that the Taiwanese people should cultivate their communal sentiment (*gongtongti yishi*). During the following year, Lee made more pleas for community building at the local and the national levels. In several speeches and interviews given between 1994 and 1996, Lee reiterated that the Taiwanese people had not had the opportunity to govern themselves until then, and thus the history of Taiwan was filled with sentiments of gloom and repression. Yet, he would declare, "now is the chance for us to walk out of our historical sadness, consolidate different ethnic groups, and cultivate a consensus among the people" so that "a new cultural vitality can prosper in our land."<sup>30</sup> He wished that the "happiness and beauty of home life" would emerge in the future Taiwanese society:

I hope every region of Taiwan will all develop in a balanced way; Every community has its public library, where the information about the natural resources, cultural landscape, and local histories of the community will be stored. I hope teachers and students at public schools will be able to obtain their knowledge about their homeland amid the abundant educational resources in the community library. Let our children learn through a discovery journey in the midst of happiness and excitement.<sup>31</sup>

Lee then concluded that only when everyone identifies with and feels rooted in Taiwan would that picture be realized. He declared, "From now on,

we shall strengthen our people's understanding of the land by all means, because only when people know about their homeland will they feel attached to it. More importantly, we shall cherish and conserve Taiwan's cultural and natural heritage. Let the island of Taiwan become a sustainable homeland for us and our future generations."<sup>32</sup>

As many scholars have pointed out, "community" is a geographically bounded term, connoting a homogenizing force among people who live in the same region. The term *gongtongti* has same ideographs as the Japanese *kyodotai*. In explicating its meaning Jennifer Robertson states, "The prototypical *kyodotai*, or communal corps, is the wet-rice-cultivating village. As a popular term, *kyodotai* is fetishistic, for it is invoked, often nostalgically, as the 'authentic' Japanese rural community. It thus connotes a pristine moral society."<sup>33</sup> In another section she writes, "*kyodotai* imparts an ambience of 'tradition' through its allusion to the communal solidarity presumed to have characterized Edo-period agricultural village."<sup>34</sup> In Taiwan's context, *gongtongti* invokes a Japan-like feeling, as it is not an ordinary usage. Therefore in addition to the "ambience of tradition" as Robertson points out, the term *gongtongti* also invokes affection toward Japan. In contrast, *shequ*, the more commonly-used translation for community, evokes a sense of modernization related to Western influence.

Corresponding to Lee's statement was the implementation of the Integrated Community-Making Program by the Council for Cultural Affairs in 1994. On October 20, 1993, Ms. Shen Xueyong, Director of CCA, reported to the standing committee of the KMT on the ongoing transformation of cultural administrations. She said that the future objective of Taiwan's cultural politics would be to reconstruct the community sentiment and community ethics. She pointed out that "cultivation of community sentiment is an often ignored function and aim of cultural construction at the local level. The old community was disseminated, and the new community is yet to form; as a result our national society lacks inner consolidation and is not a vital community."<sup>35</sup> On October 4, 1994, Shen announced to the Legislative Yuan the CCA's new community policy under the umbrella of the "Integrated Community-Making Program." The ultimate objective of this policy was to "build the Taiwanese local community into a lively entity."<sup>36</sup> She hoped that community sentiment in grassroots society would be strengthened. Under this policy, the government would establish various folklore research or preservation centers, encourage county cultural centers to hold local arts festivals, and revitalize traditional cultural industries in local communities.

Similar to the *furusato-zukuri* (homeland making) of Japan, community-making was a political project appropriated by both parties – the KMT and the DPP. Although most local groups were not directly affiliated with either party, the project nonetheless "is the means by which a consensual version of the past vis-à-vis the present, and the future vis-à-vis the past, is estab-

lished"<sup>37</sup> for the de-facto Taiwanese nation. The prosperity of local cultures would verify Taiwan's "special historical and geographical factors" and ensure the necessary diversity of the de-facto Taiwanese nation. Culture in this context became a metonym for "nation," since its apolitical implication watered down the sensitive issues regarding Taiwan's national status in the delicate cross-strait politics.

## THE NATIONAL FESTIVAL OF CULTURE AND ARTS

The emphasis on community culture in the governmental administrations first manifested in the reshaping of the annual "National Festival of Culture and Arts" (*quanguo wenyiji*) held by the CCA. Prior to 1994, the Festival, then named the "Arts Festival," featured high culture and was primarily held in Taipei; in 1994, the CCA decided to "de-centralize" the festival and delegated the sponsorship to the county-level offices.

### ARTS FESTIVAL BEFORE THE 1990S

The Festival was first held in 1982 with the theme "Tradition and Re-creation." Its programs included various high art activities, such as dancing, chamber music, and experimental theater, performed in three major cities—Taipei, Taichung and Kaohsiung. The Festival brochure highlighted some thirty prominent artists and their contributions. In the preface Chen Qilu, the Director of the Council for Cultural Planning and Development, said that "this Festival aims at presenting the works of the campaign for the 'Renaissance of Chinese Culture.'" The Festival was expected to "reach abroad so that Chinese everywhere can once again be encouraged to identify with their own culture."<sup>38</sup> Included as part of the folklore theater (*minjian juchang*), the earliest forms of Taiwan's folk music—*Nanguan* (Southern Pipes) and *Beiguan* (Northern Pipes)—were presented, yet their origins were traced to the Minnan (Southern Fujian) area of the mainland. In general, the Festival was part of the state's modernization efforts, with which "the people [can] enjoy a healthy and sound spiritual life in addition to their material affluence."<sup>39</sup>

In the following year, Taiwanese opera or Koa'hi was added as a local Chinese opera. In 1984, the third year of the Art Festival, "Folklore Opera" became the first item on the program. In addition, three local artistic activities—the Lukang Nanguan Ensemble, the Lukang Poetry Club, and the Amis (an aboriginal tribe in East Coast Taiwan)—were put on the program as outcomes of "root searching" by officially appointed folklorists. The emphasis was put on their antiquity, as relics from an ancient time when the southeastern Chinese immigrants had fled to Taiwan but carried with them a Chinese folklore tradition.

There existed a noticeable tension between modernity and tradition in the written texts of the Festival brochure. On the one hand, "cultural construction" was an indispensable step for the island's modernization; high culture, including classical music and ballet, reflected the level of societal progress. On the other hand, a reflective trend, in contrast to the celebratory embracement of all things Western, was equally present. As one editor stated, starting from the early 1980s there emerged a movement of "cultural renaissance and national awakening;" many art workers began to depart from the previous decade of "westernization current" and "look for the spirit and content of the native, the national, or the traditional cultures."<sup>40</sup> Therefore in the Festival program we see a somewhat uneasy combination of Western arts, such as classical music or dance, with "Chinese" music and folkloric art performance. As Taiwan struggled to be accepted among the developed countries, it had to prove itself able to meet the requirements for high culture; yet it also needed to re-create its traditions to compete against other culturally advanced countries.

#### THE NATIONAL FESTIVAL OF CULTURE AND ARTS IN 1994

The Festival held in 1994 was radically different from its predecessors. A key figure to it was the then newly appointed deputy Director Chen Chi-nan. The Arts Festival was the first target that Chen would reform. He first proposed the idea *Wenhua Xiaxiang* (culture descending to the countryside) to subvert the previous unequal distribution of cultural resources between the urban and rural areas. In his concept, culture did not equate to "high culture," limited to leisure activities or fine art performance. On the contrary, culture ought to be "part of daily life." Hence, folk cultures, emerging from different locales, were celebrated in the Festival of 1994. Chen led a work team to visit county cultural centers and urged them to coordinate county-level festivals. Ideally communities with special "local color" would be identified by the cultural centers. Experts were sent to those communities, and festivities would be designed around the specific traditional cultures or folk arts.

Gellner in his *Nations and Nationalism* highlights the role of "high culture," meaning "a literate, public culture inculcated through a mass, standardized and academy-supervised education system, serviced by cultural specialists"<sup>41</sup> as the anchor of modern nationalism. He also illustrates that local folk cultures can be turned into high cultures through institutional means of revival or invention and become the core of a new national identity. What we see in the transition of the National Festivals is an "authentication" process operated by intelligentsias. Through the process of discovery, identification, and selection, the originally "low" folk cultures were transformed and circulated into standardized high cultures, accompanied by the belief that they represent the national authenticity and embody "the people."<sup>42</sup>

The logo of the 1994 National Festival was a crawling toddler. Putting its left ear on the ground, the baby seems to be listening to the voice of the land. This symbol, the baby figure, had twofold meanings: it symbolized the birth of a new Taiwanese culture/nation; it can also be read as the collective image of the Taiwanese people who had just begun to pay attention to the voice of their land.

As I said earlier, the Festival of 1994 took an unprecedented turn in the direction of governmental administrations. Up until that year, the Festival programs were designed and administered by the CCA at the central government; the county centers only provided physical space and advertising assistance. After 1994, the CCA was no longer the sole organizer; the responsibility of program designs fell onto the county cultural centers. Yet the CCA still had its agenda. It demanded the county office to search for the representative or authentic cultural forms within its region. This innovative policy did not proceed smoothly in the beginning. Because this was the first time that the CCA relegated full control of the Festival to the county cultural offices, the preparation process took one year. According to Chen Chi-nan, some of the county centers, such as Ilan and Taipei County, were already experienced in leading local cultural affairs; thus they were enthusiastic in adopting a proactive role. Others, however, had never taken a lead and had trouble appreciating the intention and objectives of the central government. To enlighten those county civil servants, Chen led a group of folklore scholars to visit each county and discuss the ideas and details of their festival plans.

Progress, however, was not smooth in many counties. Some cultural offices had not had any experience in designing public events; some, especially the ones in urban areas, encountered difficulties in defining their "local specialties." In contrast, it was easier for rural counties such as Ping-tung to identify their local cultural features. In an interview, the head of the Ping-tung County Cultural Center stated, "It is all too natural to encourage the autonomy of local culture and establish a colorful multiculturalism." He said "respecting minority culture" and "emphasizing folk culture" were two trends in the cultural development of modern societies such as Europe, Japan and Korea.<sup>43</sup> Therefore, searching for local cultural products should be the most urgent task for the county cultural office.

Some cultural offices already had their own agenda in hosting cultural events; the national exemplar was the Ilan County. As the cultural office was already a focal institution within the county government, the Ilan office worked smoothly through this transformation process and had established a reputation for success in cultural affairs. Chen Chi-nan highly praised the effective administration of the Ilan office and began a close working relationship with them.

The Festival had eight groups of activities, including a fair of county cultural centers, aborigines, Hakka group, Quemoy and Mazu, temples, nostal-

gia, countryside, and high arts. It should be noted that this was the first time that three marginal groups—the aborigines, Hakka, and the offshore islands – were put in the spotlight. Quemoy was the first site for the Festival, which began on December 15, 1993. The head of the CCA led a group of central government officials to visit Quemoy and formally announced the beginning of the National Festival. Lin Baoyao said in his article “We are delighted at the discovery of a new locale of culture in our island.”<sup>44</sup> This action symbolized the state attempt to delineate its territory through incorporation of the “frontier region.”<sup>45</sup> The emphasis on minority cultures such as Hakka and aboriginal, on the other hand, indicated that the de facto state attempted to establish its legitimacy through claiming a multicultural national space filled with diverse ethnic groups.

“The Fair of Cultural Centers” was an impromptu activity held in this Festival.<sup>46</sup> In September 1994, when different plans for local festivals had just been settled, the committee began to appreciate the cultural gap between Taipei City and other regions of Taiwan. “Taipei City, with its distinguished cultural resources and the best facilities, was put in the spotlight by the mass media; thus, Taipei City seemed to become a closed system on its own; its residents had little opportunity or means to learn about arts activities held in other counties.”<sup>47</sup> Accordingly, the committee decided to host a fair of county cultural centers in Taipei City, “which became a New Year cultural gift to Taipei residents.”<sup>48</sup>

Held in Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Park, the fair lasted for five days. Its main themes included displays of local culture from every county cultural centers. In addition to their office publications, every county center had to display one craft or arts collection. Most used folklore, such as puppets, Taiwan opera, or aboriginal arts; a few urban centers such as Taipei and Kaohsiung chose to exhibit modern arts (photographs, western paintings, porcelain, etc.)

One scholar commented that the fair reminded him of “The Grand Sight of Formosa Memorial Exhibition, Taihoku” held by the Japanese colonial government in 1935 to celebrate the forty years of occupation of Taiwan.<sup>49</sup> In that exhibition, the Japanese government intended to show its fruitful colonial administration in Taiwan by displaying its economic and cultural progresses over the past forty years of occupation. He praised the Exhibition as “the first opportunity Taiwanese people had to understand the government’s construction, culture, industrial revival, and the abundant information of the land they live.” It had been an “unprecedented event waiting for the next generation to catch up.” The Cultural Center Fair, he said, was the first one following the Japanese-era exhibition in sixty years. He concluded that the Fair showed “our reconstructed faith in Taiwanese culture.”<sup>50</sup>

Although the leadership of the CCA changed frequently, the pattern established by the 1994 Festival remained in the following festivals. The

county centers continued to play the organizers’ role. A demand for “local culture specialists” in designing the annual event was thus created because many county centers did not have sufficient human resources.

## TEXTBOOK REFORM

The second force of localization came from the education sector. As Gellner pointed out, public education system sponsored by the state is the institutional base of cultural nationalism.<sup>51</sup> In postwar Taiwan, the state government has deployed several means to direct its educational system. The most explicit and powerful one concerned the insertion of “curriculum standards” upon the command of the late president Chiang Kai-shek. Through the implementation of the curriculum standards, the Ministry of Education obtained full control over the course content of public schools. Based on the national curriculum standards, the National Institute of Compilation and Translation compiled and edited all the textbooks for elementary and middle schools; the state-owned Taiwan Bookstore then published and circulated the textbooks. Accordingly, the “cultural industry of textbooks” became an effective channel for the party-state to disseminate and deepen its ideology.<sup>52</sup>

Public school textbooks were not unified until 1968, when President Chiang Kai-shek announced the “Memo of Educational Reform.” He declared, “from now on, all the textbooks of elementary and middle schools shall be edited by the same institution.” Subsequently, the Ministry of Education implemented its curriculum standards in the same year. The outcome of this production system was a uniform curriculum based on the party-state’s favored ideology, such as Confucianism and Chinese nationalism. The effect was particularly pronounced in the curricular of Chinese literature, Social Studies, “Citizenship and Morals,” and History.

Because the curriculum was based on the Republican legacy of Chinese nationalism, the nation portrayed in the textbooks denoted the cultural and historical China before the communist invasion. Chiang Kai-shek in his “Chapters on National Fecundity, Social Welfare, Education and Health and Happiness” declared that schools “must pay special attention to the teaching of ‘Chinese History’ and ‘Chinese Geography,’ for it is only through them that the student’s patriotic fervor and national pride can be fully provoked and that he can be taught to become a citizen who loves his country more than his own life.”<sup>53</sup> As early as the fifth grade, the textbook of social studies taught the students the formation process of the Chinese nation. It emphasized the national territory including “the Yellow River, the Yangtze River, and the northwest Plateau.” The Chinese nation, according to this view, was the outcome of a natural process of continued assimilation of different ethnic groups over its five thousand years of glorious history. Moreover, based on Chiang’s personal vision of Chinese history, a cult of “national heroes,” from the legendary Yellow Emperor to Chiang Kai-shek himself, was celebrated.



Chiang Kai-shek was narrated as "the savior of our nation," the embodiment of the Chinese nation.

During this period, lessons about Taiwan were narrated under a Sino-centered ideology. Taiwan was, of course, depicted as part of China; most of its current residents had Chinese descent and traced their roots to the motherland of China through various ritual practices. Yet, Taiwan was distinctive among other Chinese regions, the textbook emphasized. In contrast to the communist China, Taiwan had become the reservoir for traditional Chinese culture; the Chiang Kai-shek regime was the heir of China's political and cultural orthodoxy. As Yu Ying-shih maintained, Taiwan "well preserved Chinese culture and created [new element]. Conversely, there was not much Chinese culture left in mainland China after the violent revolution. We could only find a few altered cultural relics in its deteriorated folk society."<sup>54</sup> Following this logic, the cultural legacy established in Taiwan would become the paradigm for cultural development after the mainland becomes "recovered."

During the late 1980s and early 1990s, the old curriculum was under serious attack by numerous social groups. Scholars and politicians called for curricular reforms in Chinese Literature, History, and Social Studies to make them centered on Taiwan. For example, Dai Baocun argued, "The deep crisis that faces Taiwan today is a prevailing sentiment of uncertainty of its collective future. [This uncertainty] is a result of the past historical education, which was an instrument for the ruling elite to distort the national identity of our children and youth; it alienated school children from Taiwan's reality and forced them to become immersed in an illusionary, fabricated China."<sup>55</sup> Li Xiaofeng also complained, "Taiwan and China have followed different tracks in their histories after the Opium War. It is nonsensical for us to interpret Taiwan's history in the China context."<sup>56</sup>

Finally president Lee Teng-hui declared, "We must reform the textbooks." He stated that the history textbooks should not focus exclusively on the Chinese dynasties, but should rather expand its coverage to include the Taiwanese native history. The texts should illustrate the "historical facts of a unique existence of Taiwan. The geographical discovery of Taiwan in the seventeenth century, the Portuguese sailors that named Taiwan as 'Ilha Formosa', the immigration of Chinese coastal residents, and the Japanese colonial rule are all historical facts and ought to be told to the next generation."<sup>57</sup> On another occasion, Lee declared that students in Taiwan had been taught a "Sino-centrist" history over the past forty years, which resulted in the new generation's ignorance about Taiwan's history. He advocated a reform of historical lessons, in which native-place education (*xiangtu jiaoyu*) and community education would become the new foci.<sup>58</sup>

Corresponding to Lee's call and the pressure from various social and political groups, the Ministry of Education coordinated historians and educators for curriculum reform. In 1994 the National Institution of Compilation

and Translation began to compose a new curriculum entitled "Understanding Taiwan" based on the renewed "middle school curriculum standards." The goal of adding this curriculum was to "implement native-place education" so students would be "grounded in Taiwan, attached to China, and take a broad view of the world" (*lizu taiwan, xionghuai dalu, fangyan tianxia*).<sup>59</sup> The Ministry decided to allocate one third of the history course to Taiwanese history. After the outline was approved, an editorial committee, composed of 22 scholars and schoolteachers, was appointed in May 1995 to work on the composition and editing of the textbooks.

The "Understanding Taiwan" curriculum consisted of three subjects—history, geography, and social studies. It was not meant to replace the old curriculum but would serve as supplementary material to the old textbooks. According to the design, "Understanding Taiwan" would be taught in the 8th grade, then Chinese history and world history would follow in the 9th and 10th grades. As for elementary school students, "xiangtu jiaocai (native-place curriculum)," which did not have a uniform content as it varied in every township, became mandatory for the 5th grade students.

The major change to the new pedagogical materials was that Taiwan became the center of the worldview. In contrast, the old textbooks were centered on the historiography of the "five thousand years of Chinese civilization" and the begonia-leaf shape of the national territory of Republican China. In the new History textbook Taiwan's history began with the aborigines that were active in the island since the prehistoric period, followed by the geographic discovery of the island by Portuguese sailors; the history then narrated the consecutive takeovers of the island by the subsequent conquerors. The most controversial part of the new textbook was that it took a neutral view of different rulers. The Qing Empire was juxtaposed with the Spanish traders and Japanese colonial government. In other words, none of the outside rulers had any *a priori* sovereignty over this land.

The chief editor of the textbook, Du Zhengsheng, an acclaimed historian, allegedly had close relationship with president Lee Teng-hui. He composed several significant speeches for Lee. Before taking the editor-in-chief position for the new curriculum, Du on many occasions had already proposed his "*tongxinyuan* (concentric circle)" historical perspective as the basis for the new textbook. He argued that historical understanding should begin with one's residing place. In the case of Taiwan, the students should first learn Taiwan, then gradually expand their epistemological circle and eventually approach the whole world.<sup>60</sup> His argument became the philosophical basis of the new history and social studies textbooks.

## PUBLIC REACTION TO THE NEW TEXTBOOKS

Unsurprisingly, again, "Understanding Taiwan" textbooks provoked great controversy. In 1994 the editorial committee drafted an outline for the cur-

riculum; yet its inner conflicts, some of which were irreconcilable, soon attracted public attention. A major part of the controversy occurred over the terminology of several historical periods. For example, "restoration" (*guang-fu*), a term used by the old KMT regime, based on its Chinese nationalism, to describe the recovery of Taiwan from Japanese occupation in 1945, was challenged by several members; eventually the term was removed and replaced with a "more neutral term"—"after the war" (*zhongzhan*). Furthermore, the regime of Zheng Chenggong, the son of a wealthy pirate active in the South China Sea in the 1600s who fled to Taiwan after the Manchus took over China, was renamed "*Dongning Kingdom*," instead of the commonly used "*Ming Zheng*" (the Zheng loyalist of the Ming dynasty); some committee members insisted that Zheng Chenggong's regime was an independent kingdom rather than the loyal adherents of the defeated Ming dynasty. Yet after fiery discussion this radical proposal was dropped. In short, the conflicts emerged between those who have different views regarding the relation between China and Taiwan. For some, "China is a foreign country, and the Chinese history should be taught as part of the world history," while others argued that the special historical connection between Taiwan and China cannot be fully erased.<sup>61</sup>

Most of the public critiques were focused on the History and Social Studies curricula. Li Qinghua, a New Party congressman and pro-unification advocate, was the most ardent critic of the new textbooks. In a hearing held at the Legislative Yuan in July 1997, Li accused the new History textbook as "full of ideology and political motivation in eulogizing the Japanese colonial power; it is intended to pave the road to Taiwan Independence."<sup>62</sup>

In my view, however, the most interesting responses came from the ambivalent practitioners – the schoolteachers who had to face and resolve the ideological dilemmas in their daily work. Hughes and Stone observed that the new curricula served two seemingly "conflicting aims." They were "devised as part of state-sponsored nation-building projects" as well as a pedagogical response to an increasingly democratized society. Yet, they argued the new curricula "fail to resolve possible conflicts between these two objectives" and caused confusion with classroom teaching.<sup>63</sup>

That observation was most accurate. Right after the implementation of the new curricula, numerous complaints and questions emerged from schoolteachers across the island. In order to resolve the confusion, the Ministry of Education held training sessions for schoolteachers to sort through specific issues that they encountered in classrooms. I attended one of those sessions in December 1997. The host school—Xisong Middle School—was located on the border between the cities of Banqiao and Tucheng in the Taipei County. It was assigned to be a "model school" of the year for the new curriculum. During the one-day training course, the discussion facilitator, a schoolteacher in her early 20s, explained in great detail and

enthusiasm the objectives of the new curriculum and suggested some technical solutions to teachers' difficulties.

To my surprise, barely any part of the discussion was focused on the politics of national identity. One of the predominant complaints was the level of complexity of the new textbooks. Teachers questioned whether the content was suitable for middle-school students. In my view, that complaint may have resulted from two factors: first, the textbooks were written by scholars who had no experience with middle school education; second, perhaps more importantly, the course content was mostly new to the school teachers. Because of the previous lacking in historical education, some of the teachers had never taken any extensive course on Taiwanese history; many of them had never been trained as fieldworkers. Therefore the new curriculum brought to them formidable challenges.

A similar incongruence occurred in a roundtable discussion on the new textbook held by *Taiwan Yenjiuhui* (Taiwan Studies Association), allegedly a pro-unification scholarly organization. In this roundtable discussion participants came from two different groups—pro-China left-wing scholars and baffled middle school teachers. After a lengthy criticism offered by various scholars on the curriculum's "implicit motivation for Taiwan Independence," one schoolteacher raised her hand and said:

"I feel more confused than ever about this new textbook. Originally I thought we came here to talk about its factual errors and the learning difficulties students have encountered; yet throughout the discussion, I have only heard the criticism centered on its ideology. What we, the practitioners, are really concerned about is whether the materials in this textbook are accurate, and how to properly teach them to middle school students. The political swing is not our business!"

#### PROLIFERATION OF THE LOCAL CULTURE WORKERS

As stated in the beginning of this chapter, the new direction of cultural administrations and the curricular reform movement converged to yield fertile terrain for local history and culture workers. Many county cultural centers were in great need of local experts to design the Festival programs and compose the subsequent evaluation reports. Also a significant increase of governmental funding became available for community planning and local cultural affairs. Furthermore, frustrated and fatigued schoolteachers needed outside assistance in their native-place education. They often sought for help from local history and culture societies. Hence, although local historians and folklorists were not new occupations in Taiwan, they had never been in such great demand before. New job opportunities were created for highly educated people who chose to reside outside of urban centers; some college graduates who were tired of metropolitan life and wanted to return to their hometowns also had a new option for their life career.

For decades Taiwan studies had been pushed to the periphery in the field of Sinology. Before the 1980s, scholars active in the fields of Taiwan histories or folklore were mostly marginalized. According to official records, the earliest local cultural association was established in Tainan City in 1957.<sup>64</sup> Between 1950 and 1980, most of the local historical research was conducted by the Taiwan Provincial Archive Center (*Taiwan wenxian wei-yuanhui*), perhaps the most prestigious governmental institution dedicated to Taiwan history. According to Lin Hengdao, a prominent heritage scholar, the Center was established in 1948, one year after the 2–28 event, a major uprising of Taiwanese natives against the Chinese military government that afflicted the island in 1947, occurred. The memory of the numerous (perhaps thousands of) Taiwanese deaths foreshadowed the formation of the Taiwanese separatist movement. The KMT government had been so alarmed by the event that they had to grant the survived native elite some bureaucratic positions to avoid similar upheavals. The Center, an easy workplace with almost no political significance, was thus established to incorporate the Taiwanese elite.<sup>65</sup>

Under the one-China ideology, Taiwan studies at that time was viewed as a regional study, parallel to other regional studies within China. For example, in a book entitled *One Hundred Lessons on Taiwan's History*—a history reader written for a popular audience and published by the *Mandarin Daily News* in 1966—the author, a mainland born historian, suggested that Taiwan's history was part of his research interest in the regional histories of China.<sup>66</sup> The first chapter illustrated the geographical proximity between Taiwan and China during the prehistoric period; it argued that based on archaeological evidence Taiwan was part of the Euro-Asian continent one million years ago.<sup>67</sup> This argument was employed in the standard historical textbooks until the early 1990s. Accordingly, although local historical research or tourism was prominent in several old towns, only the historical connection with the Chinese Qing dynasty was highlighted during that time.<sup>68</sup>

The breakthrough in local history studies occurred during the late 1980s, concurrent with the lifting of the martial law and a boom in social movements.<sup>69</sup> Along with the call for political democratization, discussions about Taiwan's national status began to enter the public forum. This political opening soon inaugurated cultural changes. Inspired by the desire to search for the cultural legitimacy for an independent nation, local cultural and historical societies began to emerge in various locales. A common motif for those local organizations was to challenge the previously China-centered historiography by promoting local histories. Local historical research, therefore, was equivalent to the manifestation of cultural resistance against the Chinese nationalist regime. Hobei Cultural and Historical Society in Tanshui was an exemplar among the earliest local historical organizations. A detailed discussion about the organization and its socio-historical background is offered in the next chapter.

The oppositional approach of local historical organizations began to diminish during the early 1990s, along with political democratization and the shifts in national identity led by president Lee Teng-hui. Taiwan Studies was no longer a repressed or periphery subject. On the contrary, it began to attract abundant funding and social capital. In 1992 Academia Sinica, the most prestigious research institution of Taiwan, approved the budget for the Institute of Taiwanese History. This was a landmark of Taiwan studies, signifying its acceptance by the academic mainstream. Subsequently Taiwan studies became a prominent research subject for the students in humanities and the social sciences. Local research was also encouraged.

According to the official statistics, some thirty new local organizations were established every year after 1994.<sup>70</sup> The rapidly growing pace in this field engendered new regulations imposed by the government, which thus caused contention. To better accommodate and regulate this new occupation, the government held numerous conferences and workshops so local culture workers could communicate their thoughts with each other and with the officialdom. I attended several of those conferences.

The first national conference for local historical societies was held in Tanshui in August, 1994. It was sponsored by the Taipei County Center and organized by Hobei Cultural and Historical Society. It was held right after the National Festival, in which Hobei assisted the street fair "Remembering the Old Tanshui" (*huaixiang lao Danshui*). The presence of local historical societies called for official attention during the Festival period. Therefore there emerged a need to coordinate all the local societies, establishing a network among them and with the governmental sector. Being an important voice of the opposition politics at that time, Hobei was chosen to be the host for the conference.

During the conference, the culture workers discussed issues that they had encountered in their work on historical research and preservation. For example, in a panel entitled "fieldwork and folklore research," participants discussed how to conduct fieldwork in their hometowns and how to publish their research results. Another panel "local politics and social movements" centered on a discussion about what, if any, political and social roles the cultural workers should play in their home areas. The most commonly voiced concerns, however, were related to funding resource and allocation for their research projects or cultural activities. Many culture workers had encountered difficulties in securing governmental funding in the past. They questioned the process of funding approval, especially at the county level. Moreover, governmental regulations required local organizations to register for tax status; hence a lot of unregistered organizations were not even eligible for governmental funding. As a result, criticism over bureaucracy (*guanliao*) prevailed at the conference.

That issue, and criticism over the governmental selection of grantees, characterized the awkward situation of Taiwan's culture workers at their initial stage. Before 1994, most of the cultural organizations were established for the purpose of social reform. Therefore it was common for them to take a critical view of governmental policy. Meanwhile, however, the lack of material resources in the non-governmental section of Taiwan forced these organizations to solicit funding from the government. One participant questioned whether it was possible for an NGO to maintain its independent status had it accepted money from the government. Yet most NGOs could not afford to reject the government's money due to their own lack of material resources.<sup>71</sup>

The 1994 conference marked the professionalization of Taiwan's culture workers. It indicated an official attempt to define, classify, and coordinate the previously miscellaneous voices. It also signified the beginning of the incorporation of the non-governmental culture workers into a state system through allocation of material resources. Similar conferences were subsequently held each year by the CCA and other governmental agencies. In September 1997, the newly established Taiwan Provincial Cultural Bureau hosted a roundtable for local historical workers. The head of the Cultural Bureau declared that the objective of the bureau was to preserve folk cultures and celebrate the "special flavor" of the Taiwanese culture; the ultimate goal was to establish Taiwan's "self-confidence" through manifesting its cultural uniqueness because "we would fall under colonization by the world's dominant cultures if we did not preserve our culture."<sup>72</sup> Therefore he hoped to assemble local historical workers to save the precious cultural property for the next generation, to conserve human resources and to root culture in the land.

For local historical workers, however, the most urgent concern was, still, the lack of access to material resources. They criticized a national bureaucracy that was not supportive of its non-governmental organizations. The difficulty in obtaining funding as non-academic researchers also frustrated them. Many noted that most governmental projects were conducted by those affiliated with academic institutions; doctorate and university employment were the proof of cultural credential in the eyes of the bureaucrats. They felt that they were not given sufficient respect for the work they had accomplished.

Similar to the popular history movements occurring in Japan and Australia, the emergence of local cultural and historical work in 1990s Taiwan characterized a popular yearning for the liberation of historical and cultural interpretations from the previous hegemony. Ironically, however, many fell into the old mindset of state-centrism in which they expected an omnipresent, parental, state government to resolve most challenges, especially the financial one. This expectation then created a space for the state to intervene with what were meant to be grassroots movements. The funding distribution system was only one of the many tools that the state manipulat-

ed. Based on the system, a state project of cultural reconstruction to serve a nationalist purpose was thus enabled.

#### CONCLUDING REMARKS: INTEGRATED NATIONAL CULTURE, FRAGMENTARY BUREAUCRACY

A lack of coordination between various agencies and sectors in Taiwan's government regarding the dealings with local culture groups yielded disorders and gross inefficiencies. As one participant put it, "The state should integrate its local administrations before implementing the integrated community making policy."<sup>73</sup> Because the notion of community making was new in Taiwan, each of the governmental sectors had a different understanding of "community;" thus a local organization's dealings with the bureaucracy became complicated. Each government sector tended to have its own preference over particular communities. One worker recalled that he once sought for assistance from the Bureau of Social Work for his community, yet the official replied "Yours (his neighborhood) is the Cultural Center's 'community,' not ours." It was only because his community was famous for handicraft production.

Self-contradiction on behalf of the central government often occurred in the cases of historical preservation. While the cultural office typically recognized the qualitative significance of a historic site and that sound preservation could endorse Taiwan's status as an advanced state, other sectors such as the department of transportation may often have had entirely different points of view. A good example was the Riverfront Express Highway project planned in Tanshui in 1997, which I discuss in more detail in the next chapter. In this case, the cultural sector agreed with the local workers that the riverfront scenery was a national treasure and should not be obstructed by road construction; the tourism bureau even designated the Tanshui River a weekend resort for the Taipei tourists. The transportation department, however, proposed the express highway project without consideration for its potentially destructive impact on the riverfront scenery. Cases like this underscored fundamentally contrasting priorities within the central government's various sectors. As I will illustrate in the next chapter, the different understandings of, and aspirations for, progress frequently collided in such fashion that efforts of local culture workers were retarded.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> *Taiwan xianshi yiwu fazhan* (The Final Report of the County-Level Cultural and Artistic Development). Taipei: The Culture and Environment Foundation, <http://www.ceformosa.org.tw>, 1999.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, 1

<sup>3</sup> Idea drawn from Richard Wilk, "The Local and the Global in the Political Economy of Beauty: From Miss Belize to Miss World," *Review of International*

*Political Economy* 2, no.1 (1995), 117–134. Also compare Partha Chatterje, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

<sup>4</sup> Hoklo is the biggest ethnic group in Taiwan, who trace their ancestry to the “Minnan” region—the southern part of Fujian Province of China; about 70% of the island residents are Hoklo speakers.

<sup>5</sup> Murray Rubinstein, “Taiwan’s Socioeconomic Modernization, 1971–1996,” in *Taiwan: A New History* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1999).

<sup>6</sup> Thomas B. Gold, “Civil Society and Taiwan’s Quest for Identity,” in Stevan Harrell and Huang Chun-chieh, eds., *Cultural Change in Postwar Taiwan* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994), 61.

<sup>7</sup> Lee is in fact a “Hoklorized Hakka (*fulao ke*),” according to scholarly definition. His ancestors migrated to Taiwan from the Hakka region – Taiwan’s second-biggest ethnic group—yet their lineage has long discarded the Hakka dialect and only speak Hoklo.

<sup>8</sup> Murray Rubinstein, “Political Taiwanization and Pragmatic Diplomacy: The Eras of Chiang Ching-kuo and Lee Teng-hui, 1971–1994,” in *Taiwan: A New History*.

<sup>9</sup> Mirosława Hroch (1996) divides national movements into three phases: phase A is when the activists from a subordinate group begin to research and disseminate various aspects of a national awareness, usually as a political effort to undermine the political hegemony; phase B arises when the activists seek for a wider support from their own ethnic group; once a majority of the population accept their national identity, the movement advances to the final phase in which the striving for national identity becomes a mass movement.

<sup>10</sup> Bosco, “The Emergence of a Taiwanese Popular Culture,” *American Journal of Chinese Studies* 1, no.1 (1992), 51–6. Gold, 59–66.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> Harrell and Huang, 3.

<sup>13</sup> Nickola Pazderic, 14.

<sup>14</sup> Harrell and Huang, 6.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 7–8.

<sup>17</sup> Huang Mei-ying, *Taiwan Wenhua Duanceng [The Ruptured Taiwanese Culture]* (Taipei: Daoxiang Publisher, 1996), 28

<sup>18</sup> Du Zhengsheng, *Taiwan xin Taiwan hun [The Heart and Soul of Taiwan]* (Taipei: Hegan chu ban she, 1996), 58.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 82.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 132–134.

<sup>21</sup> Chun, “From Nationalism to Nationalizing: Cultural Imagination and State Formation in Postwar Taiwan,” *The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs*, no. 31 (January 1994), 65.

<sup>22</sup> Chiang Kai-shek “Dui Zhonghua wenhua fuxing yundong tuixing weiyuanhui Mazu fenhui chengli shumian shici” (The Keynote Speech to the Opening Ceremony of the Mazu Branch of the Chinese Cultural Renaissance Committee), <http://chungcheng.org.tw/thought/class11/0018/0013.htm>, 2000 (1968).

<sup>23</sup> Quoted from *The Organizational Outlines for Advocating the Chinese Cultural Renaissance Movement and Implementing the Committee on the Education of*

*National Spirit at the Affiliated High School of Kaohsiung Normal University*, <http://www.nknush.kh.edu.tw/admin/student/info/4-10.htm>.

<sup>24</sup> The ROC Government Information Office, *The Story of Taiwan*, <http://www.gio.gov.tw/info/taiwan2000>, 1999.

<sup>25</sup> Chun, 66.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 66–7.

<sup>27</sup> <http://public.ptl.edu.tw/publish/culture/history2/c10hsyquarter5.pdf>.

<sup>28</sup> Before 1992, residents did not have the right to elect their community representatives. Most community associations were administered by the heads of villages or township precincts.

<sup>29</sup> Quoted from Rubinstein, “Taiwan’s Socioeconomic Modernization, 1971–1996,” 391.

<sup>30</sup> Lee Teng-hui, *Jingying da Taiwan* (Taipei: Yuanliu Publisher, 1995), 10.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 9. Emphasis original.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 9–10.

<sup>33</sup> Robertson, 89.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 166–7.

<sup>35</sup> Shen Xueyong, October 20, 1993. Quoted from Huang Li-ling, *Xin guojia jian-gou yu shequ jiaose zhi zhuanbian: shengming gongtongtizhi fenxi [Nation-building and the Transforming Role of Community: An Analysis of the Discourse of “Shengming Gongtongti”]* (Master Thesis, National Taiwan University, 1995), 34.

<sup>36</sup> *The Central News*, October 4, 1994.

<sup>37</sup> Robertson, 6.

<sup>38</sup> Chen Chi-lu, “Identified Relationships in Cultural Reconstruction,” in *Tradition and Re-creation* (Taipei: Council of Cultural Policy and Development, 1982).

<sup>39</sup> Sun Yunxuan, “Message to the Art Festival,” in *Tradition and Re-creation*.

<sup>40</sup> Huang Mei-ying, “Looking for the dancing arts from our cultural context” in *Tradition and Re-creation*, 66–7.

<sup>41</sup> Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism* (London: Routledge, 1998), 37–8.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

<sup>43</sup> *Yuan Chien Magazine* (Mar 15, 1994), 135.

<sup>44</sup> *Wenyiji shi lu [The Recollection of the National Festival]* (Taipei: Council for Cultural Affairs, 1995), 288.

<sup>45</sup> Stevan Harrell, “Introduction,” in *Cultural Encounters on China’s Ethnic Frontiers* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1995).

<sup>46</sup> *Wenyiji shilu*, 32.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983).

<sup>52</sup> Shi Jisheng, *Yishi xingtai yu jiaokeshu [Ideology and Textbooks]* (Taipei: Qianwei Publisher, 1995), 11.

<sup>53</sup> Sun Yat-sen and Chiang Kai-shek, *San Min Chu I [The Three People’s Principles]*, trans. Durham S. F. Chen (Taipei: China Publishing Co., 1963), 276.

<sup>54</sup> Quoted from Lu, Shiqiang, "Notes on the Process of the Establishment of the Middle-School New Curriculum 'Understanding Taiwan.'" *Newsletter of the National Textbook Bureau* 9, no.2 (1996), 29.

<sup>55</sup> Dai Baocun, *Taiwan dao, Taiwan sheng, Taiwan guo* [Taiwan Island, Taiwan Province, and the Taiwanese State] (Pan-chiao, Taipei County: Taipei County Cultural Center, 1996).

<sup>56</sup> Lu, 21.

<sup>57</sup> Lee Teng-hui, *Taiwan de zhuzhang* [The Propositions of Taiwan], (Taipei: Yuan-liu Publisher, 1999), 138. Lee's earliest public comment on textbooks was delivered in 1995 at the 100th anniversary ceremony of Tanshui Elementary School—his alma mater.

<sup>58</sup> Liberty News, (May 27, 1996), Section 1.

<sup>59</sup> Lu, 22.

<sup>60</sup> Du Zhengsheng, "Yige xinshiguan de dansheng (The Birth of a New Historical Perspective," *Tangdai*, 120 (1997), 21.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 18–9.

<sup>62</sup> "Understanding Taiwan textbook, reference," 146, 1997.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 77.

<sup>64</sup> <http://www.cca.gov.tw/Culture/Arts/CulturalWorkshop/1-2-1980.htm>

<sup>65</sup> Lin Hengdao, *Lin Hengdao Huiyi Lu* (The Reminiscences of Mr. Lin Heng-tao) (Taipei: The Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica, 1992).

<sup>66</sup> Feng Zuomin, *Taiwan lishi baijiang* [One Hundred Lessons of the Taiwanese History] (Taipei: Mandarin Daily News, 1966), 5.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>68</sup> In his analysis of the Yi-wei uprising, Stevan Harrell suggested that an implicit resistance might have existed in the pre-1980s local historical studies. The local historians may have elaborated on this event, a popular uprising between the Taiwanese and the Japanese intruders, as a metaphor of the postwar mass-scale conflict between the native Taiwanese and the mainlanders. See Harrell, "From *Xiedou* to *Yijun*: the Decline of Ethnicity in Northern Taiwan, 1855–1895," *Late Imperial China* 11 (1990).

<sup>69</sup> Scholars often term the period between 1987 to 1990 as the peak of Taiwan's social movement, which covered issues of environmental protection, labor activism, women's liberation, and aboriginal movement. There is a huge literature written on this topic. For selected literature, see Hsu Cheng-kuang and Chang Mao-kui eds., *Taiwan xinxing shehui yundong* [The New Social Movement in Taiwan] (Taipei: Juliu Publisher, 1989).

<sup>70</sup> <http://www.cca.gov.tw/Culture/Arts/CulturalWorkshop/1-1.htm>.

<sup>71</sup> *Quanguo diyuxing wenshi gongzuodui xialingying shilu* (The Report of the Summer Camp of Local Cultural and Historical Workers), (Tanshui: Hobei Cultural and Historical Society, 1996), 13.

<sup>72</sup> Hong Mengqi, "Preface," in *Roundtable: Taiwan Provincial Cultural Bureau vs. Local-Historical Workers*, (Taipei, September 17, 1997).

<sup>73</sup> Notes taken at the National Conference on Community-making Programs, December 1997, Daxi.

## LOCALIZING THE NATIONAL PAST: HISTORIC PRESERVATION IN TANSHUI<sup>1</sup>

**D**ECEMBER 13, 1998—THE SECOND DAY OF THE *DANSHUIXUE* (TANSHUI-ology) conference held by the Department of History of Tamkang University. Nearly 100 people attended; sixteen papers were presented in a luxurious conference room on the top floor of the highest building in Tanshui, where one got a panoramic view of the town's landscape. The papers were mostly antiquarian in focus, centering on the ancient settlements, local deities, the earliest missionary and colonial-era architecture in the Tanshui area, and old-time small-town images in literature and art. The last paper, however, pulled the nostalgia-saturated audience back to the present. Before delivering his paper, Professor Huang Ruimao, a frustrated-looking urban planning scholar and co-founder of *Danshui shequ gongzuo shi* (Tanshui Community Planning Team), pointed to the wide windows spread across the walls and said:

Look at the current landscape of Tanshui; look at the urban sprawl on the hills. It is no longer the old "small town Tanshui" celebrated by the previous presenters. . . . The original landscape full of natural beauty and culture has been destroyed by monstrous buildings. . . . Why? Why did a historical town end up like this? The reason resides far beyond the local range; it is closely tied to the postwar transformation in Taiwan's political economy.<sup>2</sup>

In the discussion session, Professor Lin Shengfeng, also an urban-planning scholar, contended that Tanshui was "the most miserable case" in Taiwan's regional mismanagement. Endowed with exceptionally abundant natural resources and a rich historic heritage with great potential for tourism, the township administration was nonetheless impotent. Currently there were

two camps fighting each other regarding Tanshui's regional development, he said. One was the "mainstream statist/capitalist/technocratic camp;" the other was composed of citizen groups, namely local historical societies and cultural foundations, who painstakingly made efforts to reconstruct Tanshui's distinctive locality. Sadly, he lamented, the first bloc was as mighty as a "dinosaur," so that the power relation between the two camps was highly unequal. This had been an agonizing, if not impossible, battle for the civil groups.

Despite their ardent outcry, however, no one in this insulated room cared to respond. The audience was mainly concerned with history—what historical details were correct, how to cultivate the township residents' historical consciousness, so on and so forth. "Tanshui" was a name drawn from the past, located in an imaginary space, and not connected to the crammed suburb so vividly present outside the clear windows.

This chapter is focused on the rhetoric and practices of historic preservation and community planning in Tanshui, which I consider as a localized version of Taiwan's nostalgic practice. By detailing the efforts and rivalries associated with the town's heritage and trajectory, I illustrate how the notions of history and culture were articulated at the local level with an alternative vision of progress in contrast to the conventional model of unlimited and unregulated development. I suggest that this articulation was historically contingent, engendered by the structural nostalgia of 1990s Taiwan. As Pazderic observed, that nostalgic dream was "triggered by the loss (both real and imagined) of 'traditional Taiwanese life' during the period of industrialization . . . reflecting the longing of millions . . . for a return to what (like the KMT and its China) ordinary Taiwanese had, *themselves*, dismantled, paved over, re-educated and otherwise obliterated."<sup>3</sup>

I further contend that forgetting and forgiving what one has "dismantled" is an integral effect of the nostalgia mechanism. As illustrated in the beginning, irreconcilable discrepancies existed between the representations of the past and the material realities of the township landscape. As Rosaldo pointed out, nostalgic portrayal of the past incurs one's innocence by resorting to a primal stage before everything was politicized. In actual practices, preservationists' efforts were constantly in battle with other interest groups, such as developers and landowners. Yet all those politico-economic conflicts could be forgotten within the contemporary nostalgic representations.

I begin the chapter with a sketch of the landscape transformations of the Tanshui Township during the postwar period; the drastic townscape changes, brought by unregulated growth, triggered the formulations of several citizen groups that endeavored to preserve the town's heritage through different means. Their efforts, however, were constantly impeded by the town's complex local politics and powerful interest groups. I use three different cases – a defeated electoral campaign led by a culture worker, the "Old Street" preser-

vation project, and the coalition of "Protecting Tanshui River Scenery" – to illustrate the complexity involved in historic preservation efforts in contemporary Taiwan, where the definition of "progress" is still in dispute among different citizen groups.

## A GEO-HISTORICAL SKETCH OF TANSHUI

Located by the lower end of the Tanshui River, Tanshui was the earliest Han settlement in North Taiwan. George Mackay, a Canadian Presbyterian missionary, described his first view of Tanshui from the steamer that sailed into the river mouth in 1872: "BEAUTIFUL, indeed was that first view of North Formosa... When [Ritchie] saw the situation of Tamsui, standing over against a solitary mountain peak that rose seventeen hundred feet, and backed on the east and south by range after range climbing two thousand, three thousand, and four thousand feet high, his soul was stirred to its depth, and sweeping the horizon with his hand he exclaimed: 'MacKay, this is your parish.'"<sup>4</sup> Mackay then proceeded to recount the western-style buildings on the sloping hills, built by the Dutch, British, and Canadians who were attracted to the region by its natural harbor and the later construction of Taiwan's first treaty port.<sup>5</sup>

Mackay's fondness of Tanshui was shared by the later generations of writers and artists. Tanshui was once called the "Venice of Taiwan"<sup>6</sup> because of the combination of its scenic river, rolling hills, and foreign architecture. This nick-name, which appeared in texts as early as 1942,<sup>7</sup> might have originated with Ke Shejie, a local historian active during the 1930s and '40s, who portrayed Tanshui as a town "full of exotic aura" comparable to the Mediterranean.<sup>8</sup> The poetic and exotic images of "small town Tanshui" were thus celebrated by these literary and artistic representations. Its eight officially designated heritage sites exceeded those of any other town in Taiwan.<sup>9</sup>

Since the mid-1980s, however, urban sprawl has quickly spread into the area as the town was only 14 miles from Taipei and would become the end point for a major line of the prospective Metro Rapid Transit (MRT). Agricultural lands were transformed into concrete buildings, rolling hills covered by high rises. The poetic imagery, historic heritage, and pristine natural beauty all became tokens for real estate developers to market their new constructions. According to the statistics, the township population went up every year. By 1995 Tanshui had become the fourth densest region among the 26 townships of Taipei County. Adding the 20,000 odd student population, mostly invisible in the township household registration records, of Tamkang University and Tamsui Oxford College, Tanshui might be among the most crowded towns of the Taipei County—the most densely populated county of Taiwan.

Yet the changing reality did not seem to shatter the popular imagery. Representations about small town Tanshui persevered in public culture, and

even circulated internationally in tourist guidebooks. "Tanshui...is now a fishing village (emphasis added)," so said *The Lonely Planet*.<sup>10</sup> An American teacher told me that he explored the idea of living in Tanshui because he got the impression from that English-language guidebook that Tanshui would be greener and less crowded than the Taipei proper. Thus he was disenchanted by crammed high buildings, gaudy real-estate signs, schools of swift scooters, and thick exhaust fumes when he first stepped out to the street from the Tanshui MRT Station. "Taipei is not even this crowded," he exclaimed.

Against this backdrop the historic preservation movement in Tanshui has been complicated, caught between discrepant desires and definitions of "development."<sup>11</sup> Considering its complex history and the variety of physical remains from different settlers, a local culture worker called Tanshui "Taiwan-in-miniature." The triumphs and failures involved in the township historic preservation process may be indicative of some general issues concerning the preservationist efforts in the 1990s Taiwan.

#### HOBEI CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Established in March 1990, *Huwei wenshi gongzuo shi* (Hobei Cultural and Historical Society, hereafter Hobei) was one of the earliest non-governmental local historical societies in Taiwan. Its establishment marked the beginning of the "Era of Local Culture and History" in Taiwan. The other equally significant organization in this thread was *Danshui wenhua jijinhui* (Tanshui Cultural Foundation) initiated by the unfortunate former Township Executive Chen Junzhe. Following the success of Hobei, several smaller, mostly individual-led, historical societies were subsequently formed. During the past decade all those citizen groups have made efforts to preserve and promote the cultural and historical legacy of Tanshui. Nonetheless, as Prof. Lin remarked, the unequal power relation between the preservationists and the developers has made the struggle between the two distressful and even despairing sometimes for the preservationists.

*It was November 24, 1997. Li Zhiren—owner of Sanxiecheng, the most famous Taiwanese-style bakery (Taishi bingdian) in town<sup>12</sup>—asked me to be his translator for a faculty group from the American School. The school, mainly accommodating the children of American expatriates, was located in the Tien-mu neighborhood of Taipei City, about a thirty minute drive from Tanshui. About thirty teachers, almost all of them native English speakers, crammed in Li's tiny bakery that afternoon. They planned to offer a class on traditional Taiwanese pastry for the American School pupils after this trip. Li Zhiren, a firm supporter of the opposition party (DPP) and Taiwan-independence movement, was very anxious to entertain his American visitors. He explained in full detail the history of his bakery: His father, the founder of this bakery, learned of the recipe of English fruitcake while serving in the former British Consulate. He then blended the fruitcake ingredients with a Chinese cake recipe, and started his successful baking business.*

*Even now, Li proudly said, some of the spices required in this recipe were not produced in Taiwan and had to be imported. He then concluded: "the history of Tanshui is inseparable from the history of British colonialism in Taiwan."*

*It was the pride that Mr. Li and his friends held about Tanshui, about its complex past and its symbolic status in Taiwan's modern history, that motivated them to organize Hobei at the time when "local history" was still a novel subject in Taiwan. (fieldnotes)*

Hobei was a loosely organized citizen group. Its establishment was publicly announced in March 1990, prompted by the triumph of the Democratic Progressive Party in the national election in 1989. Yet a rudimentary form of the organization had existed long before then. Perhaps the real beginning of Hobei should be traced to 1983 when a group of local intellectuals, mostly in their twenties, decided to hold a weekly study group on philosophy, history, and politics. In the following years these intellectuals constituted the main support for anti-KMT politics in the Tanshui area. Six years later the same crowd devoted themselves to Lu Xiuyi's campaign in 1989. Lu was born in Tanshui and had been a leftist professor of Political Science at Chinese Cultural University and subsequently became a political prisoner. He won a sweeping majority of votes from the residents of Tanshui in his 1989 campaign for congress. After his swearing in for the Legislative Yuan, he provided financial support to the group and helped them to establish a formal organization entitled Hobei.

Hobei did not have a rigidly defined membership. All the participants were volunteers who used their spare time to participate in group activities. A significant portion of the volunteers came from the student body of the two universities in town. Thus the number of participants fluctuated from time to time along with the college schedules and the appeals of activities.

Without a constitution or executive board, Hobei was mainly directed by its four founders. Li Zhiren, owner of the bakery, was the main sponsor for Hobei. He offered the third floor of the bakery as an office space for Hobei, and paid the salary of its executive secretary. Ji Rongda was the second most important figure. He made his living by delivering newspapers and working as a technician in a university laboratory. Most of his leisure time was devoted to Hobei, including administering the society and training the volunteers to lead walking tours, which was the major publicized activity of Hobei. The third one, Su Wenkui, had been a charismatic leader of young Hobei members. Su was a minister of the Tanshui Presbyterian Church, and drove the school bus for the church-owned kindergarten. He was the former editor of *Huwei Jie* (Huwei Street)—the official publication of Hobei—until 1996 when he started his own historical society—*Danshui xiangtu yanjiu hui* (Tanshui Homeland Study Society), and continued his research and writing on Tanshui's missionary history. The last person, Wu Chunhe, was a reporter and then a merchant. His primary interest was field research and public education



on local history. Thus he disagreed with the high frequency of guided walks that Hobei held for outside visitors during 1997. He had said "guided walk is not our focus; fieldwork and research is. After all, Hobei is not a travel agency."

### THE ACTIVITIES OF HOBEI CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Tanshui, a lovely town blessed by mountains and waters.

Its natural environment, historical and cultural landscape were inscribed by the three hundred years of settlement history of our ancestors. . . .

Despite its abundant cultural and natural resources, the contemporary situation of Tanshui is really dreary. . . .

The reason we started this periodical [is] to record, report, witness and comment on Tanshui's diverse natural environment and cultural heritage. We also think that the awkwardness that Tanshui faces today has resulted from the cultural deficits of our society. Therefore, nurturing this lively and down-to-earth periodical is an unavoidable responsibility for us grass-root activists.<sup>13</sup>

We may view the lyrical passage above as Hobei's manifesto. "Hobei (*huwei* in Mandarin)" is the oldest name of the Tanshui township. *Huwei Jie* (*Hobeh-gueh* in Hoklo) refers to the old township center during the Qing dynasty<sup>14</sup>. Using Hobei instead of Tanshui for the journal title, therefore, indicated an awareness of local history and the attempt to recover a nativist consciousness for the place.

According to the recollections of Li and Wu, they established the society, published the quarterly, and started the guided walks because there was no space for them to express their love and concern for local history. They were all partisans of the opposition party, and thought that the fraudulent national identity that the KMT had imposed upon the Taiwanese people alienated the public from their local histories and cultures. In light of this logic, Li said, "Only if everyone identifies with the Taiwanese nation will they cherish the culture grown from the soil." Promoting local history, accordingly, was an essential step to unsettle the Sino-centrism and the power base of the KMT.

Hobei's first public guided walk was held in March 1990. They invited Prof. Li Qianlang, an established scholar in traditional architecture, to lead the tour. The first tour was about two miles long, covering historic temples and colonial remains in town. "The historical tour was perceived quite differently at that time," said Li Zhiren. They had great difficulty in advertising the tour and soliciting enough participants. "Local-related activity was still politically sensitive; the government sent three intelligence agents to follow us throughout the whole tour, just to watch what we were doing. We did not

mind though. In the end, those intelligence agents developed interests in Prof. Li's vivid instruction as well" recalled Li Zhiren in a proud tone.<sup>15</sup>

After the first guided walk, Hobei started to train volunteers. The first "training course on Tanshui's culture" was held in November, 1990. Twenty-five people registered. They took four hours of an indoor introductory course on Tanshui's historic sites and one day of outdoor guided walk. The trainees would become the guides for Hobei's future historical walks. There was no prerequisite for registration except for "a deep attachment and affection toward the native cultures of Taiwan and Tanshui,"<sup>16</sup> and all the labor would be voluntary. The advertisement Hobei sent out for the course reads as follows:

Have you ever wondered about this question: "What's so interesting about Tanshui?"

Indeed, Tanshui is a miniature of Taiwan's native history (*xiangtu shi*). In this narrow land we have gorgeous mountains, the settlement records of our ancestors' struggles, the remains of ambitious imperialism, and the glorious outcomes of interactions between East and West. . . .

You can detect the often-ignored historical information from the piecemeal remains in street if you make efforts to train yourself. Being a Tanshui native, you are obliged to understand this town and disseminate your understanding to others.<sup>17</sup>

The training course was unexpectedly popular; the number of inquiry calls far exceeded the original estimate. Excited by the popularity of the course, Hobei soon held its second training session in March 1991. In addition to the adult course, they also offered a children's camp on "the beauty of temples" in April 1991. The main activity of the children's camp was the outdoor guided tour around the four major temples of Tanshui.

In subsequent years, Hobei accepted numerous outside requests for guided walks. This was contemporaneous with the formation of the "Taiwan studies societies" in their varying incarnations at universities and some prestigious high schools. Therefore most of the requests came from educators and college students, some of whom later became Hobei's volunteers. Lu Xiuyi, the popular congressman of the then opposition party and the major sponsor of Hobei, wrote an article about his first experience in a Tanshui historical walk:

Being a Tanshui native, this historical walk was really a "root-searching" for me! Although I have walked through every street in Tanshui in past years, I have never comprehended the depth of those pieces of bricks and stones in this town. Through the experts' illustration, Tanshui became a textbook for the history and geography of Taiwan.

Being here brings out our nostalgic sentiments, and gives us the chance to reflect on our cultural tradition.<sup>18</sup>

Lu's comments, permeated with the excitement of discovering something new from ordinary life, the nostalgia of the vanished past, and the "enlightened moment" when one becomes aware of his/her "Taiwanese identity," was a typical experience that the participants in Hobei's historical walks shared. This experience is similar to what Ivy described in the section on "Discover Japan."<sup>19</sup> In her analysis on the two tourism campaigns advocated by Japan National Railway in the 1970s and the 80s respectively, Ivy argues that the trans-Japan travel "[facilitates] the narrative bounding of Japan as object of knowledge."<sup>20</sup> It is a process of "discover myself...a self that is authentic, but lost."<sup>21</sup> Through travel one becomes able to discover or even recover the lost self. In a similar vein, the lamenting of "loss" that prevailed in Taiwan's travel literature in the 1990s resulted from rapid urban expansion and the accelerating destruction of the natural environment. Traveling, even just traveling in one's hometown, became a therapeutic practice to heal one's feeling of loss. Using travel as therapy for what is "missing", one gets to imagine the re-connection to one's "lost roots" and thus feel completed.

Ivy further contends that the discovery process has another implication. By objectifying one's homeland as a subject for knowledge and adventure, the homeland becomes de-familiarized, converted to an exotic-within-itself. This process of exoticizing the interior works particularly well in Tanshui as the town was already famous for its European ruins. It was frequently used as a proxy for European scenery in TV commercials. I will talk in more detail about the tour in missionary district in Chapter six. Yet even fragmented objects could be of use. I have stated in the Introduction about the weekly fieldwork conducted by Hobei members in their hometown. The exciting small discoveries and a practice of reading the linkage made between miscellaneous objects, such as tombstones of Qing soldiers and Canadian missionaries, water pumps left from the Japanese tap water system, Baroque style poles on the façade of street houses, shrapnel holes from the Allies' air raid during the Pacific War, all made Tanshui a domestic exotic. When asked to comment on the European architecture in town, one college graduate in her twenties stated that the juxtaposition of different colonial ruins in Tanshui "assured" the town's place in the world and signified the multi-cultural characteristics of Taiwanese society.<sup>22</sup> This comment resonates beautifully with Ivy's writing on Japan, in which she argued, "What is really exotic is a Japan that can montage such disparities with such exciting aplomb. The seemingly indiscriminate cultural mixing and matching that some have taken as the hallmark of modern Japanese becomes, in the global matrix of advanced capitalism, the stylish prerogative of an affluent nation."<sup>23</sup>

For the members of Hobei, the initial stage was at once exciting and overwhelming. As I said earlier, local history was yet to be a mainstream subject in 1990. Their concerns over Tanshui's local history and culture, albeit genuine, had not been appreciated often by the press. Therefore they did not even anticipate the popularity of the guided tours. As Li Zhiren told me, the fame of Hobei came from "being in the right place at the right time (shi shi zao ying xiong)." "We started the quarterly *Huwei Jie* only because no newspaper or publisher was willing to publish our articles on Tanshui's native history, so we desired our own journal." Yet, the idea of historical walk "rode on the coattail of the nativist trend emerging in Taiwan right after that time."<sup>24</sup> Moreover, Tanshui was only 14 miles from the Taipei proper, thus it became a convenient site for Taipei tourists to "consume their overflowing nostalgia."<sup>25</sup> Gradually the requests for historical tours from outside groups overwhelmed this purely volunteer organization. The members began to feel exhausted, and an inner division occurred.

This is what led to the 1994 split when Su, the former senior editor of *Huwei Jie* founded his own organization—Tanshui Homeland Study Society (Danshui Xiangtu Yanjiuhui). According to Su, he left out of the disappointment at how "culture" was being consumed in Hobei's public activities. He claimed that culture should be a down-to-earth product, closely tied to the everyday life of ordinary people. "Culture is not just about old things, serving only tourists' nostalgia."<sup>26</sup> Yet, he said, this small organization was pushed away from its original objective—preservation and promotion of Tanshui's culture—by the increasing demands of Taiwan's nostalgic consumerism. Therefore Su felt that he would not be able to work on his vision if he stayed in Hobei.

#### TANSHUI HOMELAND STUDY SOCIETY AND MISSIONARY NOSTALGIA

Mr. Su founded Tanshui Homeland Study Society after leaving Hobei. The first objective in his agenda of the new organization was to connect with the social mass, educating them about Tanshui's complex history and enlivening Tanshui's culture.<sup>27</sup> Underlying his pedagogic intention and activist attitude was a retrospective appreciation of the town's earliest local historian and folklorist, Ke Shejie. Ke gave a series of lectures on the history and folk cultures of Tanshui in 1935; the title of his lecture *Danshui xiangtu jiangzuo* (Native-Place Lecture Series on Tanshui) inspired the name of Su's new organization.

Ke was the eldest grandson of the Canadian missionary George Mackay.<sup>28</sup> He had studied at Kyoto University and then graduated from Taihoku Imperial University (the former title of the National Taiwan University) with a bachelor's degree in history. After college he came back to Tanshui and taught at Tanshui Chugaku (Tamkang High School after 1945) until the 1960s.

Being a trained historian, Mr. Ke did systematic research on Tanshui's history and published in major newspapers frequently. In 1929 he published the book *Shi mei zhi xiang—Danshui* (Tanshui—the Land of Poetry and Beauty) which incorporated essays about Tanshui's geography, history, folklore, and photographs. It was the first book centering specifically on Tanshui. Different from local records left by Qing officials, Ke's cultural imagery of Tanshui was surprisingly global. He compared Tanshui to foreign cities, including Kobe, Nagasaki, Hong Kong, and Rome.<sup>29</sup> He described Tanshui as "the town most resembling southern Chinese scenery (*nanman secai*) and the most exotic (*yiguo qingdiao*) harbor in Taiwan."<sup>30</sup> In his highly romanticist representation, Tanshui is a "Utopia,"<sup>31</sup> a colorful montage of miscellaneous ruins from other times. In addition to his folklore studies, he also participated in the civil union to petition for the revival of Tanshui harbor. He composed several proposals regarding Tanshui's township development.

Ke Shejie's work was well preserved by Tanshui Presbyterian Church, where Mr. Su, as a church minister, did extensive research and translations.<sup>32</sup> Following the example set by his missionary antecedents, Su devoted himself to educational work. Sponsored by the township government, he edited one pictorial booklet on Tanshui's "four hundred years of history," an illustrated tourist map of the township, and two brochures mapping out the temples and military ruins in town.<sup>33</sup> He also worked with elementary school teachers in designing and instructing courses of native-place education, such as slide shows about Tanshui's historic sites, outdoor tours of Tanshui's natural and cultural landscapes, and preparation for commemorative events.<sup>34</sup> He also wrote two *xiangtu jiaocai* (textbooks on native-place education), one on Fort San Domingo, the other on *hongshulin* (the mangrove forest on the outskirts of Tanshui).

Mr. Su's social activism led him into the political realm. In April 1998, he announced his campaign in the township election held two months later. He would run for the councilman for the third precinct, which covered the neighborhoods in the town center. Different from conventional electoral campaigns, Su did not seek affiliation with any political party or faction. He declined the intention of the Democratic Progressive Party to nominate him as a candidate. Instead, he wished to maintain his "independent candidacy" and not be affiliated with any traditional political camp. In a proud and excited tone, he exclaimed, "my campaign will be an innovative experiment in Taiwan's local politics."<sup>35</sup> Whether he would win a position in the township council was not the major concern. Rather, he said, his primary intention was to disseminate his idealism of social reform and community-building to the masses (*qunzhong*) through his campaign. To carry out his idealism, Su refused to employ Taiwan's conventional campaign tools, such as loudspeakers, convoy vans, bulk mail and vote buying. Instead, he utilized his artistic talent and cultural knowledge in designing sophisticated, informative flyers

on Tanshui's history and culture. He also gave talks and slide shows to the residents of newly built apartment buildings to "promote [his] idealism to those newcomers." In a proud and zealous tone, he said "I am interested to learn how well we, the cultural workers have been received by the public.... 1,500 votes would be enough to send me into the township council. If the ten years of community work can not even earn me 1,500 supporters, then I will have to conclude that our hard working over the past years has totally failed the public."<sup>36</sup>

His good intentions did not win the approval of the majority, however. Su was defeated by about 100 votes and lost the battle to other candidates from local factions. In a reflective article Su summarized three reasons for his electoral failure. First, most people viewed "culture" as an upper-class leisure activity and did not associate it with the political field. Second, Taiwan's intellectuals had neglected grassroots issues and public service for a long time; hence they exerted very little influence on the folk society. Third, most intellectuals had the tendency to segregate and alienate themselves from the social masses. Su went further to warn that the wide applause that the media and urban intellectuals had given to the local cultural and historical workers was only ephemeral. Most people did not share the same concerns with the self-segregated and marginalized intellectuals. "It is undeniable that Taiwan's political culture is disgusting," Su said. Yet "we all participate in it. We must share the blame for the distorted value system of our society." Last, Su concluded that his failure, along with many other local intellectuals who had run their campaigns in this local election, indicated the difficulties, as well as possible directions, for Taiwan's community work in the future. "We have a long way to go."<sup>37</sup>

#### TANSHUI CULTURAL FOUNDATION AND THE UNFINISHED PROJECT LED BY EXECUTIVE CHEN

Ever since the first township election in 1951, the township mayor's position (*zhengzhang*) had always been occupied by traditional faction leaders until 1990, when Chen Junzhe was elected. Chen held a master's degree in computer science and had been living in the US for several years before coming back in 1989. Upon the request of his father, a former township mayor and leader of one local faction, Chen devoted himself to the township election and was soon nominated by the KMT as their official candidate. Combining support from his father's faction and the newcomers who found his advanced education and cosmopolitanism appealing, Chen won 58.35% of the votes and became the mayor of Tanshui.<sup>38</sup>

Although being the "heir" of a faction leader and supported by the KMT, Chen was indeed a devoted reformist. The top priority of his political agenda was to "enliven the conservative, close-minded town and revive its honorable tradition."<sup>39</sup> He wanted to resolve the generational conflicts between

factions and to integrate different parties in township development. Tanshui Cultural Foundation was thus established under the idealist goal. "Only music and art can transcend political boundaries," he said. By promoting community art programs, Chen hoped the communal appreciation of art and music would eventually help reconcile the tensions among different factions. Therefore he invited leaders from different factions to join the board of Tanshui Cultural Foundation and appointed Mr. Zhang Zilong, an artist and professor at National College of the Arts, to be the executive director of the foundation.

Chen was the first township mayor ever concerned about coordinated community planning. Having lived in the United States for eight years, he was intrigued by the "high quality of life" and "effective management" of most American communities. "I was only an impoverished graduate student in America, but my life quality there was much better than what I got in Taiwan." He lamented the pitiful living environment in Taiwan, which was flooded with money and yet where a "backward attitude regarding the quality of life still perseveres." "Education is the first step to change people's minds," he decided. To facilitate public education, he appointed local historian Zhang Jianlong to edit the township monthly "Golden Tanshui" which was freely distributed to every household in town. In terms of material construction, he built a five-story township cultural center in 1992 to accommodate a public library, local history information center, and an "art and performance" hall. In respect to community planning, he cooperated with the Tanshui Community Planning Group at Tamkang University in several planning projects, including "the Waterfront Park Project" and the "Tanshui Old Street Revival Project."

Despite his idealistic aspiration, however, Chen did not escape from his fate of being caught in factionalism. He said, "Regardless of my painstaking efforts to transcend the factional boundaries, the cells of [my father's] faction still flow in my blood" and became the obstacle of his reforming projects. There were two major *pai* (factions) in Tanshui—Li *pai* and Chen *pai*, which have been archenemies ever since the first township election in 1951. Traditionally the KMT would alternate its nomination between the two factions in each township election. In 1981, however, the KMT decided to skip the nomination process and let the two factions compete against each other. The candidate from Li *pai* won and fulfilled two terms. In 1989, the two factions competed against each other again in KMT's nomination process. According to the old logic, Chen *pai* would get the nomination as Li *pai* had ruled the town for eight years. The Li faction objected however. Their reason was that they didn't get any help from the KMT in the past two elections as the elections were open and no one was nominated. Therefore the KMT owed them a nomination this time. Nevertheless the KMT decided to nominate Chen Junzhe from Chen *pai*. Part of the consideration was that Chen

was a well-educated young man; hence he had much better qualification than the other factional candidate—an elementary-school graduate in his sixties. Needless to say, members from Li *pai* were enraged. The candidate of Li faction decided to withdraw his KMT membership and held a small-scale demonstration in front of the Taipei County KMT Office. These pre-electoral conflicts overshadowed Chen Junzhe's political future. As soon as he was sworn in, the township councilmen from the opposing factions boycotted many of his innovative projects. The tension between the mayor's office and the township council was heightened in 1994, after Chen defeated the Li faction again and successfully pursued his second term.

The first thing the councilmen objected was the construction of the Cultural Center. Their reason was that the Center building was too extravagant for the town and depleted too many resources from a very limited township budget. They eliminated the 450 million NT budget for the construction of the performance hall already in progress in the basement of the Cultural Center. Therefore Chen had to raise money from private sources. One source of funding that he pursued was the real estate companies that had greatly profited from the skyrocketing housing price in Tanshui area since 1988. Using his administrative power, Chen indirectly "hinted" to those real estate companies to donate a certain percentage of their profits to public construction and the planned Tanshui Cultural Foundation. This act soon elicited severe attacks from the township council. In 1995, Chen and his secretary in general were sued by two councilmen for bribes and corruption.

Another controversial project was the "Golden Tanshui Monthly." Zhang Jianlong, the editor of the monthly newsletter, was originally an active intellectual in the local anti-KMT campaign. Chen did not mind Zhang's critical attitude in political matters. On the contrary, he gave Zhang complete freedom in framing the content of the monthly newsletter. Golden Tanshui was a big success in terms of its intellectual level. Unlike most other township publications, it did not limit itself to being a sheer "township hall newsletter." Rather, Zhang utilized his expertise of local history and fieldwork training to make this newsletter a nearly professional journal of local history and culture. His activist concerns also permeated Golden Tanshui, as the monthly constantly made critical comments on the township politics, including the issues of over-development, pollution, traffic, the lack of coordinated urban planning, and so on. This approach often troubled local politicians. In their view, Golden Tanshui, which relied solely on the township budget, should have incorporated more positive reports about the "significant leaders in town," and weighed in less on criticism. Their discontent finally burst out in 1996: the budgetary committee deleted the entire subsidy for Golden Tanshui. Zhang then resigned, and a new editor took over.

The difficulty that Chen encountered illustrated that most local leaders still framed the township policies in the old, factional way. They interpreted

everything Chen had done as strategies of gathering capital for his faction instead of a benevolent attempt of cultural development. Meanwhile, even the progressive citizens did not completely transcend their old way of thinking regarding local politics. Some members of Hobei were DPP supporters and did not fully embrace Chen Junzhe as Chen was a KMT member. A Hobei member once said that he never had dinner with Chen, despite their collaboration in various township development projects. He feared that his DPP comrades would mistaken him as a party traitor.

In August 1996, Chen Junzhe's tenure was suspended due to the scandal around his fundraising for the Cultural Center construction. A temporary mayor took over. Afterwards most of the cultural projects were halted. Among them the most influential one was the "Old Street Revitalization Project" initiated by the core members of Hobei and the Tanshui Cultural Foundation.

#### TANSHUI OLD STREET REVIVAL COMMITTEE—AN UNFINISHED PROJECT

Zhongzheng road is not the oldest street in Tanshui Township, but it is definitely the wealthiest neighborhood in town. The high density of local celebrities in this neighborhood elevated its political visibility. Its advantageous riverfront location has long made the street a major tourist attraction. Therefore in public discourse, Zhongzheng road has gradually replaced Chongjian Street, the "real" oldest street in town, to become referred to as Tanshui's Old Street.

Another significant reason for the street being the focal point was that its appearance had not changed much since 1935, when the Japanese government proceeded in its "city renovation (*shiqu gaizheng*)."<sup>40</sup> In 1995, however, the Housing and Urban Planning Bureau (HUPB) of Taiwan Provincial Government announced the renovation project of Tanshui Zhongzheng road. The old street houses were to be torn down, the road to be widened and renovated into a "modern and high speed road."

Li Zhiren, head of Hobei, and Xu Huiming, deputy director of Tanshui Cultural Foundation, became concerned with the possible destruction of the old streetscape by the project. According to them, the history of the Old Street was the most valuable property of the township residents.<sup>40</sup> Yet the renovation project proposed by the HUPB paid no consideration to the humane scale of Tanshui Old Street, thus not conforming to the need of street residents.<sup>41</sup> To this end, they organized the Old Street Revitalization Committee in 1995. They even recruited one township councilman, who was then elected to be the chair of the committee.

The committee was a cooperative outcome of local residents and outside professionals. Professors in urban planning and architecture were involved, so was an construction consulting company with capital investment from the

United States. Their goal was to come up with an alternative plan for the renovated street houses. Ideally the project would follow the street plan made by the Japanese government sixty years ago; the façades of all the street houses would adopt a uniform style that would resemble colonial-era architecture. Chen Junzhe, who was then township mayor, fully supported this project. The Town Hall offered two million TWD of subsidy, while Li and Xu raised another five hundred thousand to match the consulting fee.

Different from the purist stance of historic preservation, which often objected to any modification of the "original" architecture, the committee accepted the fact that the old street would and should be renovated, based on pragmatic reasons. What they requested was to preserve cultural capital for tourist industry by retrieving its character as an "old street," while renovating the street with futurist concerns. The committee surveyed two hundred and sixty retail stores on the street. Most of them preferred to widen the street, remodel the houses, and re-pave the sidewalk built in Japanese period.

Despite the initial enthusiasm, the whole project was halted when Chen Junzhe's tenure was suspended for the lawsuit. The substitute mayor did not take an active role in pursuing the project. The only thing he did was to suspend the tearing-down process, which made the housing situation worse as residents were forbidden to remodel or repair their houses.

#### TANSHUI RIVERFRONT EXPRESS HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION PROJECT

On Nov. 14, 1997, the Ministry of Transportation announced the Tanshui Riverfront Express Highway project. According to the road plan, an express highway would be built on the river bank, connecting Tanshui and Beitou. The goal of the road project was to lessen the traffic congestion for Tanshui residents; yet its original plan would very likely cause irreversible destruction of the river front scenery, which the local cultural and historical groups valued deeply.

The traffic between Tanshui and Taipei had long been an important issue in local politics. Because of its hilly landscape, there was only one artery, parallel to the river, connecting Tanshui to downtown Taipei. Most commuters living in the town center used to take trains to Taipei until 1988 when the old railway was demolished and expanded into the Mass Rapid Transit.

In fact, traffic was not a serious problem until the mid-1980s, when developers started to purchase agricultural lands outside the town center and developed a series of high-density housing projects. Modern apartments or condominiums were erected on the hills. Population quickly expanded but an expansion of public transportation did not follow. The bus services to the outskirts were sparse. Consequently, most residents chose to drive to work. The dramatic growth of automobiles soon clogged the road. In 1998, the

most clogged section of the road—the 2 miles between Tanshui Station and Zhuwei neighborhood—took 20 minutes to drive during rush hours.<sup>42</sup>

To make the already severe traffic situation worse, the coastal region west of Tanshui, which was open land, was designated by the central government to be the site for a “new town project (*xin shizhen*),” anticipated to accommodate three hundred thousand new residents. The new town project however did not include any detailed plan of public transportation. Without bus or MRT service, those newcomers would have to commute on the already clogged road. The anticipated traffic complications cast a shadow on Tanshui’s housing market. Tanshui’s housing prices had always been lower than other suburban towns of equal distance from the Taipei metropolis despite its better living environment. According to some surveys, traffic was the main obstacle for potential house buyers. Worse yet, the overly expanding real estate development in late 1980s resulted in an oversupply of new housing units in Tanshui. It was estimated in 1998 that there were three hundred thousand unsold or unused housing units in town.

Against this backdrop, there had long existed a strong demand on behalf of town residents to solve the traffic problem. Constructing new roads was considered the most convenient solution. Because of the restrictions of the hilly landscape, however, there were only two possible routes for the new road—first, to make a tunnel between Tanshui and Beitou, the northern margin of Taipei city; or second, to build a road on the green belt along the river. The second proposal apparently demanded much less financial investment and time than the first one. The only “problem,” however, was that the two mile-long green belt on the river front was a nationally-designated natural preservation area for the world’s largest mangrove forest. Therefore in order to make the construction possible the law would need to be changed.

The road plan soon aroused contention among the residents. Most grassroots leaders objected to it because the plan would destroy the green belt, and, most of all, would block the existing view of Tanshui River and Mt. Guanyin, which are considered to be two representative scenes of Tanshui. Yet they were most cautious in promoting a large-scale protest. They all thought it would be the factions, and not local residents, who would profit from the road plan, as many faction leaders had put huge amounts of money into the new town project on the west coastal region, and would not get profits if the traffic problem was not solved quickly. Yet most of the town residents backed the plan since “solving traffic congestion” was its overt goal. That night, Xu suggested advocating a mass protest against the road project, or calling a referendum on the plan. Yet Ji did not concur. He said this road had been discussed in the public forum for a long time, and most people seemed to look forward to it. “If we called out a protest, we would become the common enemy of the town people.”

Having failed to obtain initial support from his grassroots partners, Xu chose to cooperate with professionals in fighting against the road project. In December, Xu invited Prof. Huang to write an article in the newsletter of the Tanshui Cultural Foundation to criticize the flaws of the Tanshui Express Highway project. Huang argued that Tanshui’s river view distinguishes it from other suburban towns. “If the river was blocked by the express highway, why bother to move to Tanshui?” Huang further asserted that the “traffic problem” was indeed *the* reason that Tanshui did not turn into another faceless suburban town. The traffic inconvenience limited housing development and population density in the Tanshui area, and allowed an above-average amount of green space for this area. Finally, the memory of the Tanshui River is an indispensable part of Tanshui natives’ collective memory. The river’s destruction would be tantamount to the destruction of the historical consciousness and native identity with the land.<sup>43</sup>

Following Huang’s article, Prof. Xu also wrote about the possible destruction of Tanshui’s ecology by the express highway project. He said that blocking the connection between Tanshui locals and the river was like burying the past and the future of Tanshui. In the same issue, Prof. Zeng criticized the whole project as “ridiculous and illogical,” especially if compared to Ilan’s coordinated efforts on placemaking and its “new architectural movement.” Tanshui would vanish in history if the highway was built up. “Without the Tanshui River, Tanshui will not be Tanshui.”

On December 17, the Tanshui Cultural Foundation called out a meeting to prepare for the establishment of the Coalition Against the Tanshui River Express Highway. As the township election was coming up in the following month, quite a few candidates showed up at the meeting. The participants included local politicians, professionals, grassroots leaders, and social activists from outside. An urban planner criticized the road plan as “a great waste of resources,” as the budget of seven billion TWD was used to shorten the traffic time from 24 to 10 minutes. They also questioned why the Ministry of Transportation did not consider any alternative, such as building a light rail, increasing the load of the present MRT, drilling a tunnel, etc.

Grassroots leaders recalled that the road project was first proposed fifteen years ago. At that time the township executive collaborated with other faction leaders to obtain approval from the central government for the road project; their reason was that “the economy will not prosper unless we have bigger roads.” Yet the initial project was canceled, possibly because the different factions were unable to resolve their conflicted interests. This time, they said, the road project, albeit challenging, might be a chance of awakening for Tanshui locals to recognize the value of their town’s natural resources. Therefore the long-term goal for the Coalition should be to educate Tanshui residents about the value of their historic and natural heritage.

One person in the audience held a completely opposite opinion however. Mr. Dai, the chair of the township council and allegedly the biggest investor in the coastal area, objected furiously to the environmentalist point of view. He said that the development of the local economy should be the priority of the town. The Tanshui local did not benefit from the town's natural and cultural resources; only the Taipei tourists did. He got more and more emotional as the argument went along. At last he exclaimed, "if the only factor impeding the road construction is the so-called national treasure *hongshulin* (mangrove forest), I will consider bringing a big crowd of people to burn down the forest!"

Mr. Dai's fervent comments aroused quite a few gasps in the audience. It was obvious that the road project had become the subject of battle between two camps—the traditional local factions and the coalition of progressive activists. The local factions embraced the road project wholeheartedly, expecting that the project would greatly profit their business and land investment. "Resolving the traffic congestion" was the most forceful argument that they held, which seemed to be widely agreed on, and even anticipated, by the residents on the outskirts. One councilman, also running for the next township election, stated his concerns over the destruction the highway would bring to the riverbank and proposed an alternative route to solve the congested traffic. Yet, he turned to the reporters sitting beside the conference table and exclaimed: "do not write down what I just said in the newspaper. I won't have a chance to get elected should my people learn about my objection against the express highway!"

The grassroots leaders on the other hand put their emphasis on the symbolic status of Tanshui River in the local history and culture. While agreeing that Tanshui's traffic problem needed urgent solution, they maintained however that the cultural and natural value of the Tanshui riverbank was too important to be sacrificed for transportation concerns. Ji, representing Hobei, showed the audience a historical map dating back to the Qing dynasty and pointed out several crucial historic heritage sites along the riverbank. He said that those historic sites were the only remains of Tanshui's settlement history; they would be destroyed, and the artifacts would forever vanish, should the highway be built up on the riverbank. Song, a newcomer representing the Wilderness Conservation Association, used his own relocation experience to illustrate the attraction of Tanshui to most new residents. He said, "A lot of newcomers moved from Taipei city to Tanshui over the recent years. Why did we decide to move here? It's all because of the beautiful scenery of the river." He used the case of the East Coast Highway, which destroyed most of the valuable natural views of Hualian and Taidong in Eastern Taiwan, to warn the audience of the unavoidable destruction an express highway would bring to Tanshui. He said: "what we want to conserve is not just historic heritage, but also the essential things that humanity needs." Concerning the tourist busi-

ness, a local activist said that Tanshui would definitely become a major tourist attraction in the next year after the government implemented its earlier-announced "two-day weekend" system. He questioned the contradiction the highway brought to the recreational plan of the Tourist Bureau, by which Tanshui was attributed to be a getaway resort for Taipei's stressed-out residents. Prof. Zhang projected this incident into the next century. He said that Taiwan's economic development has brought a significant amount of material wealth to average people. Now the important issue is "what will we leave to the next generation besides money?" He said that "culture or bread" was no longer a zero-sum choice in contemporary Taiwan. On the contrary, most Tanshui residents were enjoying an affluent life. The most urgent issue at the moment was to salvage the "pitiful piecemeal remnants of Tanshui's [cultural heritage] from the previous brutal, large-scale, destruction." Zhang Jianlong, a local historian, then broadened the Coalition's mission to the environmental issues of the whole island. He stated that the Tanshui River was not just a local river, but "Taiwan's river." Every person with environmentalist or cultural concerns should be involved in the Tanshui river protection movement. Therefore he proposed to organize a national coalition to save the Tanshui River.

Following the first meeting, Hobei held an in-group discussion about its intervention strategies. Ji suggested that the members divide into four groups, along the planned route of the express highway, to investigate the possible damages the highway would cause. He showed slides of the historic ruins and old pictures of the vanished sites. He emphasized that lots of historic sites had already disappeared. Yet "it is exactly because of their disappearance that we need to do better investigations and publicize the results." Otherwise, the construction company would assume that no human beings had ever lived on those riverfront areas. He said he did not want to see the same disaster occur as the case in the "New Town Housing Project," where numerous artifacts were brutally destroyed by the developers before historians and archeologists had any chance to examine and investigate those historical remains.

On December 26, the group met again. Xu reported their meeting with the transportation and urban-planning bureaucracy three days before. The officials told him that it was the first time they ever heard about any objections against the highway. They had been to Tanshui five times inspecting the road base and never heard any local resident complaining about the project. Both the town hall and the citizens that they met embraced the project wholeheartedly, they said. One of the grassroots leaders, also running in the township executive race, responded that the technocrats did not care about the humanistic and cultural aspects of social life. He said the highway would destroy two crucial facets of Tanshui's township life—the fish population and

the riverfront. "The Tanshui Riverbank is the most valuable heritage for Tanshui people, and must not be destroyed," he exclaimed.

Prof. Zeng from the Urban Planning Department of Tamkang University, on the other hand, suggested that the leaders utilize this crisis as an invaluable opportunity to educate local residents about the importance of Tanshui's cultural property. He said lots of his intellectual friends declined to visit Tanshui after the MRT was built. They felt that Tanshui has been changed a lot after the drastic expansion brought by the mass transportation. He said Tamkang's architecture students would definitely like to help with the movement because they did not want to see Tanshui disappear after they graduate.

On Jan 9, 1998 the Cultural Foundation had planned to hold a public debate on the Highway project for the Township executive candidates. Yet, only the DPP candidate attended. The KMT candidate was absent without giving any notice. Consequently, the time originally set for the debate was used for another meeting among the grassroots leaders. They decided to make a flyer with Tanshui River's image totally blocked for distribution to the township residents. It was also suggested that an alternative version of the Environmental Impact Evaluation of the highway project be made by the grassroots leaders and urban-planning scholars. Unlike the official version of the Impact Report, which focused only on the benefits the highway would bring to transportation, the alternative version would focus on the impact on the Old Street if the new highway was to be built.

One of the local leaders, the chairperson of The Lion's Club, attended to the meeting. He was very worried about the possible friction the protest might cause among the township residents. He said that the highway had been proposed five years ago, mainly by the Zhuwei community residents on the outskirts of Tanshui. They pleaded to the transportation bureau to construct an extra road to resolve the congested traffic around the Zhuwei area. He warned that some residents might resent the protest as a deterrence against the transportation project. "Environmentalism and Developmentalism do not go along with each other," he exclaimed. Between the two, most of the residents would rather choose development and dismissed the possible impact the road may cause to the environment, he asserted.

Because of his wariness, the alternative version of the Environment Impact Report would emphasize three arguments: first, and probably the most convincing one to the local residents, the highway would not be the best solution for Tanshui's traffic problem; second, the road would bring a drastic destruction to Tanshui's natural and cultural landscape. On the one hand, the riverside would be terminally transformed and lose its original function—channeling the periodic flood of the Taipei Basin during the rainy and typhoon seasons. On the other hand, the Tanshui River, an indispensable part of Tanshui's collective memory, would completely disappear. Tanshui would

then become a place without "roots." Third, should the highway be built up, Tanshui would lose its major tourist attraction—the riverfront scenery. That would be in conflict with the original urban planning for Taipei's leisure space, which designated Tanshui as one of the most important and easily accessible places for weekend activities for Taipei residents.

On January 15, the Coalition announced their own version of the Environmental Impact Evaluation to the media. There were several points emphasized in their report: first, the riverbank in Tanshui area is the only scenic trail along the Tanshui River. Therefore it deserved special protection. Second, the highway would eventually destroy all the historical ruins of the settlement history of the Taipei Basin. Those historic remains were priceless and must not be sacrificed for any economic reason. Third, the highway project contradicted the original planning for Tanshui's public transportation, which supposedly relied on the MRT as the major commuter channel. The highway would greatly diminish the number of MRT passengers and encourage people to drive, adding to the congestion of Taipei city and putting the cost effectiveness of the MRT in great danger.

#### CONCLUDING REMARKS

Due to the forceful challenge from the Coalition, the express highway construction plan was temporarily suspended. According to some Coalition members with rich experience in social movements, the fight was not over; they suspected that the transportation bureau and local factions were just waiting for the opposing voice to fade. Once the issue faded from public attention, they said, the construction would begin quietly and quickly before they even have a chance to coordinate a large-scale protest. Too much economic interest had been involved in this project to allow it to be cancelled, they said. Public apathy toward this potentially disastrous project, moreover, enabled the few factional leaders to monopolize the decision making of public construction and to profit from it. To verify their pessimistic view, I asked some local residents and outside visitors to evaluate the pros and cons of the road construction. Most of them did not know how or where it would be built and thus were unable to assess its outcome, even though they all had heard of it. A college student who managed a web site providing tourist information of Tanshui and "dedicated to the beauty of the small town" responded to my inquiry: "progress is good; I support the road because it will solve Tanshui's traffic problem. I don't know what impact it will have on Tanshui though; the question needs further exploration." Apparently he did not feel any urge to learn more about the project, much less participate in the township activism. His indifference was fairly representative among township residents.

Back to the beginning episode, during my field process I was constantly baffled by the seemingly contradictory attitudes of most self-claimed Tanshui



lovers: how can one talk about their images and memories about Tanshui in such an affectionate way, yet be completely silent about the regional mismanagement that had transformed the town into anything but a memorable historical town? How can local politicians celebrate their roots in Tanshui while promoting short-sighted and disastrous construction projects? All those puzzles may be partially resolved if we consider the politics of nostalgia. In a slightly different context, Rosaldo writes: "[n]ostalgia is a particularly appropriate emotion to invoke in attempting to establish one's innocence and at the same time talk about what one has destroyed."<sup>44</sup> Nostalgic rhetoric carries us to childhood innocence, a primal stage before everything is politicized. In a township politics so complex as Tanshui, where there existed numerous conflicting interests and irreconcilable visions of the town's locality, nostalgia, referring to a remote past that might have never existed, was the only commonly agreeable language that would not offend any party or arouse any moralistic turbulence.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> There are at least three different spellings of the township name in English literature: George Mackay, the famous Canadian missionary arriving Taiwan in the turn of the century, used Hoklo pronunciation "Tamsui" in his travelogue *Far from Formosa*. "Tanshui," on the other hand, is in accord to the official transliteration system of postwar Taiwan. The township government and the Metro Rapid Transit (MRT), however, for unknown reason decided to mix the two different spellings and invented "Tamshui" as the station name. In this dissertation I will refer the town as "Tanshui."

<sup>2</sup> Notes from Huang Ruimao's presentation at the Tanshui Studies Conference, December 13, 1998, Tamkang University, Tanshui.

<sup>3</sup> Nickola Pazderic, 18–9, emphasis added.

<sup>4</sup> George Mackay, *From Far Formosa*, (New York, Chicago, & Toronto: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1900), 33, emphasis original.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 282–3.

<sup>6</sup> Huang Deshi, *Taiwan Youji* [A travelogue of Taiwan], (Taipei: Taiwan Shangwu Yinshuguan, 1967).

<sup>7</sup> *Taiwan tetsudo ryoko annai* [Guidebook of Taiwan Railway Travel] (Taiwan Sotokufu Kotsukyoku Tetsudobu [Taiwan Railway Bureau], Taihoko-shi: Toa Ryokosha, 1942), 158.

<sup>8</sup> Cited from Zhang, Zhiyuan. *The Cultural Imagination of Colonial and Dis-colonial [sic.] Texts—reread [sic.] the Landscape of Tan-shwei Pu-din* (Master Thesis, the Graduate Institute of Architecture, Tamkang University, Taiwan, 1999), 208–9.

<sup>9</sup> Those sites are: Hongmao Cheng (San Domingo Fort), Beimen Suoyao, Yinshan Temple, Tamsui Oxford College, Longshan Temple, Matsu Temple, Mackay's Cemetery, and the former residential house of the British Imperial Customs.

<sup>10</sup> Robert Storey, *Taiwan—A Travel Survival Kit* (Hawthorn, Vic., Australia; Berkeley, CA, USA: Lonely Planet Publications, 1990), 136.

<sup>11</sup> I owe this argument to Lisa Rofel's book *Other Modernities*, that modernity is composed of disjunctures and "belated moments." Yet I substitute "development" for "modernity" because in Taiwan *fazhan* (development) or *jinbu* (progress) are more frequently heard than *xiandai* (modern).

<sup>12</sup> "Taiwanese style bakery" refers to those that sell traditional festive pastries (wedding cakes, moon cakes, sweet offerings for deities, etc), as opposed to "Western-style bakery (*xishi bingdian*)" selling bread, cookies, cakes and pies.

<sup>13</sup> Su Wenkui, "Editorial," *Huwei Jie* 1 (1990), 13.

<sup>14</sup> Historians have different arguments regarding the origin of the term hobei. Zhang Jianlong and Zhou Mingde, both local historians of Tanshui, suggest that the sound "ho-bei" was drawn by the earliest Hokkien settlers from the tribal name of a disappeared plain aboriginal tribe who inhabited Taiwan's northern coast before the 18th century. Another equally popular theory is that "hobei" derived from the Hoklo pronunciation of "hu-wei," meaning the end of "hu" which was a special fishing facility widely used by the fishermen in northern Taiwan and Penghu Islands. The third interpretation holds that "hobei" stands for the Hoklo pronunciation for *yu-wei* (the tail of rain), a vivid description of the rainy climate of Tanshui area. For a detailed discussion, see Zhang Jianlong. *Xunzhao lao Danshui* [Searching for the Old Tanshui] (Pan-chiao, Taipei County: Taipei County Cultural Center, 1997).

<sup>15</sup> Interview of Li Zhiren, November 19, 1997.

<sup>16</sup> *Huwei Jie* 2(1990).

<sup>17</sup> Su Wenkui, *Huwei Jie* 2 (1990), 2.

<sup>18</sup> Lu, Xiuyi, *Huwei Jie* 3 (1991), 3.

<sup>19</sup> Ivy, *Discourses of the Vanishing*.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>22</sup> Interview of Wang Xun-ya, quoted from Zhang Zhiyuan, 262, fn.60.

<sup>23</sup> Ivy, 53.

<sup>24</sup> "Interview of Su Wenkui," *Tanshui Diqu Yiwen Tuanti Diaocha* (Survey of art and cultural groups in Tanshui) (unpublished manuscript, Department of History, Tamkang University, 1995).

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> George Mackay was born in Oxford, Canada in 1844. He was trained and sent by the Presbyterian Church to Taiwan as a missionary. He resided in Tanshui in 1872, then opened a clinic, women's school, and the Oxford College sponsored by his Canadian compatriots at home. He married a Taiwanese plain-aboriginal woman and died in Tanshui in 1898. His children and grandchildren were all active ministers and educators of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan. George Mackay's story has been an indispensable part in the collective memories of Tanshui township residents.

<sup>29</sup> Zhang Zhiyuan also makes the same observation of Ke's work in his master thesis. See Zhang, 108–9.

<sup>30</sup> Ke Shejie. *Danshui Sumiao* (Tanshui Portrait). Taipei: Chengwen chu ban she, 1985 (1932); quoted from Zhang, 108.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Su published a book and several articles on Tanshui's missionary history, which included the work of George Mackay and Ke Shejie – both of them served as ministers in their lifetimes.

<sup>33</sup> Su's publications are *Tu shuo danshui siba nian* [Illustrated 400-Year History of Tanshui], *Danshui zhen daolan ditu* [The Tour Map of Tanshui], *Danshui zhen simiao caifengxing* [The Beautiful Temples of Tanshui Township], *Danshui zhen paotai yu gubao xunli* [The Gun Post and Old Castles in Tanshui Township].

<sup>34</sup> In 1996, Tanshui Elementary School, the oldest school in town, celebrated its 100-year anniversary. Schoolteachers, local historians, politicians, and gentries collaborated in the celebration. Mr. Su was also involved. The anniversary resulted in a couple of edited volumes on Tanshui's local history and legends, most of which were transmitted only through oral tradition before.

<sup>35</sup> Interview of Su, April 25, 1998.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Su, "Jiaohao bu jiaozuo de zaidi gongzuozhe [The Idealistic yet Unpopular Local Intellectuals]," *The E-journal of South Humanity and Culture*.

<sup>38</sup> Cai Minghui, *Taiwan xiangzhen paixi yu zhengzhi bianqian: Hekou zhen "shanding" yu "jiezai" de zhengdou* [The Local Factions and Political Changes in Taiwan: the Struggles between the "Mountaineers" and the "Street Fellows"] (Taipei: Hongye wenhua shiye youxian gongsi, 1998), 165.

<sup>39</sup> Interview of Chen Junzhe, July 27, 1998.

<sup>40</sup> *Liberty News*, November 8, 1995.

<sup>41</sup> *Huwei Jie* 9 (1995).

<sup>42</sup> My experience in 1998.

<sup>43</sup> Huang Ruimao, *Wenhua Danshui* 10 (1997).

<sup>44</sup> Renato Rosaldo, "Imperial Nostalgia," *Representations* 26 (1989), 108.

#### CHAPTER 4

## LOCALIZING THE NATIONAL FUTURE: PLACE-MAKING MOVEMENT IN ILAN

IN THE COLLECTIVE SEARCH FOR "NATIVE TAIWAN" MANY PLACES HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED as reservoirs of the authentic, each conserving different aspects of the kaleidoscopic Taiwanese culture. Yet, very few if any have utilized the past as thoroughly as Ilan. Since the early 1990s, the Ilan county government has striven to build its distinctive locality with the cooperation of urban planners and culture workers. Through a decade of place-making, Ilan has become reputed as "the most nativist county of Taiwan." Its vision of regional planning, moreover, has prefigured the built environment of a Taiwanese nationalist aesthetics. Chen Chi-nan, the famous advocate of community revitalization, once said Ilan had "an enduring sense of place in this becoming-placeless Taiwan."<sup>1</sup> To fulfill the otherwise unattainable dream of building an authentic place, he relocated his vision to Ilan after resigning the position of deputy director of the Council for Cultural Affairs in 1997 to continue his unfinished community projects.<sup>2</sup>

Chen's recognition of Ilan's achievement in place making was shared by the mass media, cultural workers, and the Ilan county government itself. "The Ilan experience" became "the exemplar for cultural construction by local governments" in Taiwan's cultural discourse.<sup>3</sup> As stated earlier, a prevailing sense of cultural crisis emerged in many local regions of Taiwan in the late 1980s, in which the notion that culture, in particular native or folk cultures, as needing to be "preserved" or "developed" became widely acknowledged. The key factor distinguishing Ilan from other places, however, was its effective, coordinated bureaucracy. In the previous chapter I have described how the place-making project of Tanshui was interrupted by unwilling local politicians. The blueprint envisioned by the community workers was undermined because it failed to articulate the interests of local

political factions. It was not uncommon for Taiwan's community workers to be trapped in futile struggles of local politics, which have become a major frustration for them. The Ilan experience was a rare case in which local government successfully initiated and coordinated a place-making movement. This exceptional process, it should be noted, was only made possible by the distinctive regional politics of the county where non-KMT politicians had controlled the administration system since 1983.

Culture has long been an ideological battleground for political parties in Taiwan. Exposing the extensive and forceful cultural maneuvers of the ruling party, Winckler wrote, "the extraordinary success of Nationalist cultural policy in shaping Taiwan's postwar cultural development is another sort of 'miracle.'"<sup>4</sup> Ironically the "Ilan miracle," created in opposition to the cultural ideology of the KMT party-state, was based on similar maneuvers in which a strong-willed county government implemented a "direct cultural policy"<sup>5</sup> through vigorous political initiatives to produce and transform the cultural consciousness of the locale. The politico-cultural maneuver that the Ilan government made to territorialize its local administration was no different than the geo-political project of the nation-state in grounding its nationhood in a specific space. In other words, Ilan's cultural project coincided with Taiwan's nation-building process, and thus critics saw its central coordination by local government as a localized version of state-centrism.<sup>6</sup> Yet it was exactly because of this parallelism that Ilan's cultural experience became so highly acclaimed in the late 1990s. Toward the end of the Lee Teng-hui regime, the symbolic implication of Ilan had changed from being the haven of political rebellion to the guardian of Taiwanese native cultures. The cultural implementation of the Ilan government attracted national and international attention, and successfully cultivated a sentiment of localism interwoven with the Taiwanese nationalism and cosmopolitanism.

This chapter describes the place-making tactics employed by the Ilan County government; most of the programs were carried out by its Cultural Center (now the Bureau of Cultural Affairs). Many of the county programs have been valorized as exemplars of Taiwan's political and cultural accomplishments; members of its power elite, moreover, have been promoted to the central government by president Chen Shui-bian's new political regime. Therefore I suggest that a detailed analysis of Ilan's technologies of locality production is illuminating in understanding the formulation process of the new form of governmentality in the 1990s Taiwan.

### ILAN COUNTY; GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

The county of Ilan is located in the northeastern corner of Taiwan, about 50 miles from Taipei. Steep mountains, which extend into the Pacific Ocean, separate the county from the Taipei Basin and contain the flatland of the

county, known as the Lanyang Plain. The mountains are a major factor that postponed the county's development. While the superhighways built during the 1980s quickly incorporated many west-coast counties into urban centers, Ilan, the "back-of-the-mountain area" was left out. Its connection to Taipei City relied on a railway and two winding roads all dating back to the Japanese period. The lack of modern, rapid transportation system prevented Ilan from being transformed into another suburban area of the Taipei metropolis as was the fate of other west-coast counties within the same distance from Taipei proper. Many workers had to move to cities, leaving their family behind, and only returning home during weekends. Over the past 15 years the population of Ilan County remained stable at roughly 460,000, a notable statistic considering Taiwan's rapid population growth during those years.

While other rural counties also shared the above problems such as transportation difficulties and depopulation of wage earners, Ilan was unique in its history of local politics. The county people elected the first non-KMT county magistrate in 1981; in the subsequent two decades the KMT have never won any of the county magistrate elections. This long period of political victory of the opposition party became a legend of democratic movement, and won for Ilan the name "Mecca of democracy."

Despite its fame, the uneasy relation between the county government and the KMT at the central level delayed development of Ilan's infrastructure. The county relied mostly on an agricultural economy and did not have sufficient tax income to support itself. Ilan, like other agricultural areas, depended to a large extent on subsidies from the central government to fund its construction expenditure. The financial dependency of the periphery has been a crucial factor by which the KMT retained its centralized power in Taiwan. Ilan's "political rebellion" then sabotaged its opportunity to obtain governmental funding. One famous case illustrating the uneasy struggle between Ilan and the central government was the road project of the Taipei-Ilan express highway. The road construction was temporally suspended by the Executive Yuan in 1989 because the Ilan government rejected an investment project of the Taiwan Plastic Corp. in Lize Industrial Park and defied the development plan supported by central government. The suspension of the road project was viewed as a "punishment" for Ilan's political disobedience.

Financial dependency and the complex political struggle forced the Ilan county government to seek alternatives for invigorating its local economy and consolidating its power. Culture thus came into play. Cultural tourism was planned as a major source of county income; a project of cultural revitalization that directly challenged the KMT's cultural policy further consolidated the political legitimacy of the county government. The amount of attention that the Ilan government paid to the revitalization of vernacular culture coincided with the postmodern nostalgic praxis of post-martial law Taiwanese society. Mass media and Taiwan-consciousness boosters depicted

Ilan as a symbolic site where authentic Taiwanese cultures could still be saved from the insensitive developmentalism of the KMT. After 1994, many of Ilan's place making strategies were adopted by other counties, and even adopted by the central government to boost the collective consciousness of Taiwan as a unique *national place*.

### A BRIEF POLITICAL HISTORY

Ilan's production of a distinctive locality should be seen in the context of its peculiar local politics over the past two decades. Critics often interpreted the exceptional trajectory of Ilan's regional development as the outcome of its long "anti-oppression" tradition, which enabled the county government to think differently from the KMT about the trajectory of regional development. This history of political resistance has been reified through Taiwan's political transformation during the 1990s; it provided a powerful frame for the collective memory of the place and indoctrinated the temporal imagery of Ilan. The legacy of Ilan's democratic politics began with Guo Yuxin, an outspoken provincial councilman whose tenure lasted for 25 years (1948–1972). Guo's reputation was established for two reasons: first he never joined the KMT and, for that matter, was constantly censored by the KMT government. As widely circulated in the local legend, Guo was defeated in 1972, which ended his tenure, because the KMT bought and fabricated votes. Second, Guo was brave enough to criticize the government – a dangerous thing to do under the Chiang Kai-shek regime. After the defeat in 1972, Guo immigrated to the US; his position was later inherited by Lin Yi-hsiung, and subsequently the three consecutive county magistrates (1983–present).

The real breakthrough of Ilan's administration system occurred in 1982, when Chen Dingnan, a businessman in his mid-thirties with no prior political background, was elected to be the county magistrate of Ilan and ended the domination of the KMT in this county. Chen's surprising victory was based upon several factors: First, although Chen had no prior experience in the political realm, his educational background (as a graduate from National Taiwan University, the best university in the country) appealed to a lot of voters. Secondly, and probably more importantly, the tragic murder of the family of another significant Ilan political figure—Lin Yi-hsiung—inspired a lot of people to participate in the democratic movement. Lin was a provincial legislator and a leader of the anti-KMT movement at that time. He was arrested after the Kaohsiung uprising of December 1980. During the period of trial his mother and twin daughters were found dead in their apartment. Only his eldest daughter survived despite serious injuries. The murderer was never identified, but many people believed that the homicide was committed by secret agents of the KMT to punish the democratic leader. Ilan locals reacted very strongly to this tragedy as Lin was elected there and well regarded by his supporters. A woman from Lin's native village remembers:

I shall always remember the day when Lin Yi-hsiung carried the ashes of his three deceased family members back to our village. The whole street was silent; everyone stood in their porch, waiting for the funeral troop. . . . My family has always voted for the opposition party since then.<sup>7</sup>

Chen Dingnan won that election. He soon implemented several new policies: schools would no longer hold the daily morning ritual of flag raising; movie theaters would no longer play the national anthem before the featured film; and the notorious personnel-cum-censorship office "*Renner Shi*" would no longer exist at public schools to watch the course content and control teachers' political loyalty. Those reforms aroused a lot of criticism from the pro-KMT conservatives, who portrayed Chen as a tyrannical, "self-serving" radical. For Ilan locals, however, none of the political reforms meant much; what they really cared about was the improvement Chen made in the then-staggering and corrupted county bureaucracy. The following anecdote has been shared by quite a few people:

On the first day of Chen's term, county officials went to work and found to their horror that the magistrate had already stood outside the county hall, waiting for everyone to come in. Before then, the Ilan officials were infamous for their laziness and corruption. From that day on they realized that life would not be as easy as before.

In his second term between 1986–1989, Chen proposed "environmentalism" and "tourism" as the two primary trajectories of county development. In conformity with these goals, he rejected the plan for the Sixth Naphtha Cracker factory to be built in the Lize Industrial Park by the Taiwan Plastic Corporation, a proposal which would have brought "thousands of job opportunities for the economically depressed Ilan." Chen mobilized county residents for a street demonstration in front of the Ministry of Economics, and declared that he would cut the water supply of the plant should the project pass. Consequently, the corporation decided to pull out of Ilan. Annoyed by the government-led resistance, however, the Executive Yuan decided to withdraw the plan for the Taipei-Ilan express highway, which had been proposed by Chen and was still being discussed in the Legislative Yuan. The cancellation of the road construction secluded Ilan from the suburban sprawl of the Taipei area,<sup>8</sup> and inadvertently strengthened Ilan's sense of place.

Chen's administration was so successful that many locals adored him to the degree of deity worship. One common folk legend was that no typhoon dared to attack Ilan during the eight years of Chen's tenure, inferring that Chen was blessed with some sort of supernatural power. Therefore Chen's fame placed a lot of pressure on his successor, Yu Hsyi-kun. In 1989 when Yu won the election, many people doubted that, with only high-school

education, he could have exceeded his precursor even though he vowed to "inherit" Ilan's anti-KMT tradition set by Chen. Soon after he took over as county magistrate, Yu faced a difficult position of striking a balance between conforming to the opposition route paved by Chen and distinguishing his own administration from that of his predecessor.

The path that Yu chose was based on "culture," already a highly contested term but one which had never been prioritized in any county administration. By focusing on culture Yu would achieve two aims. On the one hand, the emphasis on local or native culture would effectively contest the KMT's China-centered cultural ideology; on the other, the delineation of a local culture would ground the political legitimacy of the oppositional county government. In this sense, Yu's cultural practice was similar to the decolonizing project of various post-colonial nation-states, in which a newly-emerged nation state built up their political legitimacy by transforming and re-articulating the cultural memory of its people.<sup>9</sup>

The cultural policy that Yu adopted was a gradual process. In the beginning "culture" equated to the oppressed and endangered vernacular culture (the "archaic Taiwanese culture.") In the campaign platform for his first term in 1989, Yu proposed to reform KMT's China-centered pedagogy by implementing a native-place curriculum and "mother-tongue" (dialect) education. He coordinated educators to compile textbooks of various dialects, and of Ilan's history and geography. In addition to textbook reform, Yu implemented the "folklore heritage" program (*xinchuan jihua*), which involved more than half the public schools within the county.<sup>10</sup> In this program each participating school was designated to develop a certain folk art, such as lion dancing, Taiwanese opera (Koa-a-hi), puppet theater, ethnic music, Atayal weaving, and so on, as its extracurricular student training. Despite some controversy regarding what "Taiwanese folk art" would include,<sup>11</sup> the educational reform that Yu advocated in his initial political stage was soon widely established in the Ilan county in opposition to the China-centered curriculum.

In his end-of-the-year speech to the county council in 1991 Yu first advocated "Building the County with Culture" (*wenhua lixian*). In his second electoral campaign for magistrate in 1993, "Culture," "environmentalism," and "tourism" were written into Yu's campaign platform as the three fundamental objectives for county development. At the time when most local politicians in Taiwan firmly believed in unlimited economic growth and technological advancement, Yu's devotion to cultural affairs was unprecedented. Thus Yu's culture-first policy effectively distinguished him from the predecessor Chen Dingnan and made him equally legendary in Ilan's dangwai (outside of KMT) legacy.

## THE SPIRITUAL HOMELAND OF TAIWANESE PEOPLE

In 1993, Ilan County Government published an illustrated book entitled *Ilan: The Spiritual Homeland of the Taiwanese People* as part of its self-promotion effort. Edited by a renowned journalist Yang Xianhong, this book was composed of annotated photos and poetic depictions of the county landscape and folk life. Its main theme was to celebrate the natural and cultural beauty of the Ilan county. Based on the proposition that geographical "distinctiveness" shapes the distinctive characteristics of the people, it stated that Ilan people were innately "introverted, persevering, yet hospitable," due to their geographic seclusion. The spectacular beauty of the county was the proof that Ilan natives "valued their native place more than any other Taiwanese." Even after relocating to other areas, the book further stated, Ilan people retain a strong attachment to their native place. "They (Ilan natives) identify themselves and others as Ilanese by their unique accent" regardless of where they live.

In addition to celebrating the place, the book aspired to educate a wider crowd. In the conclusion the editors stated their hope that readers would be caught and inspired by the place of Ilan. They declared, "The objective of our county policies is to preserve a clean land where we will build a haven for the Taiwanese people to nourish their souls and embrace the beauty of Mother Nature."<sup>12</sup> They believed that "the dream of Ilan is exactly the dream of the Taiwanese people; the trajectory of the county parallels the direction of Taiwan's path."

The book *Ilan* was only one of many examples that illustrated the conscious place-making process of the Ilan county government, a project that involved urban planners, cultural workers, and idealistic administrative officials. The ultimate goal was to build a model for alternative development. In the process, Ilan as a place was attributed multiple levels of symbolic meaning; it became the remedy for public nostalgia in the contemporary frenzied search for "Taiwanese essence," a microcosm of "Taiwan's cultural and natural environment,"<sup>13</sup> and a model for a "green" politics.<sup>14</sup> Although the place-making process began with revitalization of folk culture, it did not remain reified in the frame of traditional culture, as with other projects of historical reclamation. Rather, future-oriented rhetoric was often adopted, in which a selected past was set up as a fixed point of reference against which one could measure the present deficiency, as a fundamental step toward envisioning a utopian national future.<sup>15</sup>

Just like the technologies of imagining the nation-space, Ilan's place-making movement was a spatiotemporal process. In terms of temporality, the county's history was rewritten on a Taiwan-centered chronology. New practices of commemoration reorganized public memory. In terms of spatiality, an ensemble of extensive community projects and a "new archi-

ecture movement" was implemented to transfigure the county's cultural landscape.

### "RECONSTRUCTING OUR HISTORICAL SUBJECTIVITY; CONSOLIDATING OUR SELF-IDENTITY":<sup>16</sup> CREATING A SPACE FOR LOCAL HISTORY

Many scholars have pointed out the interwoven relationship between identity formation and historical writing. Identity formation is grounded in history—a selective compilation of the multiple pasts. Historical narrative, conversely, is subject to change along with the shifting of present identities. In a different context (war commemoration in Japan) Yoneyama writes, "The dominant processes of spatial containment define the proper territories for memorializing, prescribing whose experiences should be remembered and when, where, and how they should be invoked."<sup>17</sup> Rewriting history is often the first step for a nation-state or ethnic group to establish the basis of identity formation. The Ilan government has placed a lot of emphasis on historical preservation. As early as the Chen Dingnan period, a group of high-school teachers, sponsored by the county government, had worked on excavating and recording historic sites within the county. Members of this preservation team later became important players in Yu Hsyi-kun's advisory group. In January 1992, the Ilan County Archive Center was planned as a database for the newly established Series of Ilan County History. It was the first government-owned local history archive center in Taiwan.

On October 16, 1993, Ilan County Archive Center was formally opened to the public. This date had a special meaning for Ilan. 197 years ago the first Han settler had arrived in Ilan on this date after a long hike from Taipei. The event symbolized the beginning of Ilan's written history, regardless of the prior one thousand-year long settlement of the plains aborigines in this area.<sup>18</sup> As Yu said in his opening speech entitled "Reconstructing Our Historical Subjectivity; Consolidating Our Self-Identity," the establishment of the County History Archive was an important step in the transformation process of local historical consciousness from oriented toward the "China proper" to native-centered.

The library collection included research data gathered within the Ilan region, archives such as news coverage drawn from a major newspaper during Japanese occupation, literary work written by Ilan-born authors, and general reference books for local history studies. In addition, the library published "Ilan Archives," a bimonthly journal with contributions on folk religion, historic heritage, and other locally related reports.

The establishment of this archive inspired greater attention to local history preservation in Taiwan. In 1996 the Taiwan provincial governor James Soong requested every county office to put more effort into preserving their local historical archives. He also demanded that each county set up a specific

sector to collect and manage the archives. Per his command many county offices sent their staff to visit Ilan's history library. Consequently, the library became an exemplar library for other Taiwanese counties, inaugurating a "trend" of local archives preservation.<sup>19</sup>

Another history making process focused on re-figuring commemoration. "The 195th Anniversary of Ilan" was held in 1991 to celebrate the first Han settlement in the Ilan region. Five years later, "Ilan 200" opened up with five different festivals, which brought significant tourist money to Ilan and marked a new periodization of local history. As Rutheiser comments on "urban festival markets," "Characterized by slick marketing and a high romanticized and selective use of history, the festival market married the consuming imperatives of the shopping mall with the programmed feel of the theme park."<sup>20</sup> In Ilan, the enlivening of cultural festivals has had an additional implication by signaling a shift in historical time from a China-centered chronology to a local one.

### COLONIAL NOSTALGIA

The shifting of the framework of Ilan's historical memory from China to the local necessitated a re-evaluation of the Japanese occupation—perhaps the most awkward and ambivalent period in Taiwan's history. Witnessed at the Museum of Ilan's Political Settlement was a pervasive sense of colonial nostalgia. This museum was remodeled from the county magistrate's official residence. It is a Japanese-style house, situated in a neighborhood of governmental housing established during Japanese occupation. In 1997, right before Yu's tenure ended he decided to remodel the house into a museum exhibiting Ilan's political past. The decision had a two-fold intention. First, the exhibition would encourage public education on Ilan's unique political history since the Qing dynasty. Second, the remodeling and preservation of the house fit well into the preservation policy conducted by the county government.<sup>21</sup> Yu said that the purpose of building the museum was to let the "people of Ilan understand how their ancestors have handled public affairs under different political regimes."<sup>22</sup> He hoped that visitors would draw on the past experience to figure out the direction for the future development.

Just like everything political in Taiwan, the museum was not without controversy. Its architecture was criticized as resembling to a "stereotypical" Japanese restaurant.<sup>23</sup> According to the critic, the original house was a mixture of Japanese aesthetics with the "living space and raw material" of Ilan locals. Yet the architect erased all Taiwanese flavors and remodeled the house and its surroundings according to coded images of Japanese landscape architecture.

The museum was Taiwan's first exhibition center on the history of local politics. It had four sections, each one dedicated to a different facet of Ilan's political history. At the entrance there was a panel presenting the different

boundaries of the Ilan county throughout the three political regimes of its history – the Qing Dynasty, the Japanese period, and the KMT period. The local history begins in 1812, when Ilan (then Kamalan) was incorporated into the territory of the Qing Empire. By using different lights the visitors could get a sense of the shifting boundaries set by different regimes. It should be noted that the ROC government was juxtaposed with the Qing and Japanese governments. In the preface of the museum brochure it was written that

Ilan was not incorporated by the Qing Empire until 1812. After that Ilan has been ruled by the Qing, Japanese, and the KMT governments. Each political regime has sent their governors to control the people, resources, and administrations of this place. During each period, the ruler had different attitudes and ways of political control. People in Ilan also reacted differently to each of the political powers. Therefore we juxtapose the historical materials from different period.

The memorial was said to express the “root” of the Ilan spirit, presumably different from other places in Taiwan due to Ilan’s unique settlement history and geographic location. In tune with the multicultural aura produced by the county government, the memorial also showed how the various ethnic groups within the county had “resolved their original conflicts, and moved forward to harmonious and cooperative ethnic relations in this land.”<sup>24</sup> In other words, the past ethnic struggles and oppression between Han and the aborigines were purged in this official space of memory. What was presented was a harmoniously juxtaposed ensemble of local culture named Ilan.

#### ARCHITECTURAL MOVEMENT—CREATING THE NEW LANDSCAPE

Lefebvre proposed that architecture is a human production that turns nature into a cultural landscape imbued with complex politico-social relations.<sup>25</sup> In other words, through architectural construction we transform undifferentiated “space” into “place,”<sup>26</sup> an act that, similar to Nadia Lovell’s argument, constructs the landscape as a “primary source of involvement for the establishment of human belonging and emplacement.”<sup>27</sup>

In addition to the transformation of its historicity, the Ilan government also worked on modifying its cultural landscape. Starting from the late 1980s, the Ilan county government has been collaborating with local historians and architects to define, design, and promote an “Ilan architectural style.” Three parks, the County Hall, the Memorial of Ilan’s Political Settlement, the Performance Hall, several bridges, school buildings, and some private houses were built under this agenda. These examples of a “New Architecture” have become the icons of Ilan’s regional identity and tourist attractions. In a sense, Ilan’s coordinated urban planning pioneered a new national aesthetics for

Taiwan. Its cultural landscape shaped the sense of place and belonging for the local residents. “Ilan, a place with a better future” was often said by the locals when comparing its landscape with the bad urban planning of Taiwan’s west coast. Ilan’s architectural movement was meant to maintain and strengthen the sense of locality in an era of globalization where the world is filled with a sense of “the loss of local stabilities and local originalities.”<sup>28</sup>

Despite the attribution of “newness” to the architectural movement, its constructions indeed exhibited a juxtaposition of different elements drawn from Taiwan’s past. Moreover, the architectural movement was interwoven with multiple layers of discourses enunciated by journalists and scholars who, often in a celebratory tone, attempted to comprehend and define the socio-historical implications of Ilan’s newly-constructed cultural landscape. As a result, Ilan’s locality was envisioned by architects as a selective evocation of the past and an imagineering projection for the future. This production of locality, however, can only be grasped within the context of globalization as many of the architectural projects of the movement were actually designed by Japanese architectural firms.

According to the dominant narrative, the canon of Ilan’s architecture started with the exemplar – The Tung Shan River Park—built by the “Elephant” group, an extension of a Japanese architecture firm “Team Zoo.” The park was the first artistically-designed recreational place in Taiwan. While looking for contractors to plan the park during the mid-1980s, the county magistrate Chen Dingnan, unsatisfied with Taiwan’s architectural quality at the time, searched numerous Japanese journals and became intrigued by the work of Team Zoo. Chen invited the firm to design the park on a riverbank adjacent to a wetland. It took the firm almost eight years to complete the construction, and the outcome would become highly influential for Taiwan’s public constructions. Tung-shan River Park, a public park with deliberate artistic landscaping, marked the perfect endpoint to Chen’s eight years of tenure. Its tidy, coordinated design soon became the showcase of Ilan’s alternative development strategy; the park itself has been the most popular tourist spot in the Ilan County.

Tung-shan River Park soon became the icon of Ilan’s “green politics,” symbolizing the clean and efficient administration of the county bureaucracy, and “the hope of Taiwan” at large. Its popularity not only elevated Chen to the realm of national politics, but also promoted Ilan’s reputation. Locally, the park developed a sense of pride among the residents about their native place. After the park was built, one poll indicated that the Ilan locals had the highest sense of pride among the twenty-one counties in Taiwan; they also felt most satisfied with their county magistrate Chen Dingnan.<sup>29</sup> Many stories circulated about how the architectural miracle was made possible. One of the most famous stories was that Chen had checked every single tile of the bathrooms in the park, making sure that those tiles were perfectly clean. His

high standards aroused some adverse reactions among bureaucrats, but also won him the title of "Qing Tian," referring to the legendary governor Bao in Song dynasty.

Tung Shan River Park was viewed as a proof of how well a local community could do without the intervention of the corrupted and inefficient bureaucracy of the KMT.<sup>30</sup> Tung Shan River became known as "the River of Life, the Eternal Hope of Taiwan."<sup>31</sup> The miracle of Tung-Shan was broadcast by the DPP in the county magistrate campaign in 1993 and the provincial governor's election in 1994 to show that they could do a better job of administration for Taiwan than the KMT.<sup>32</sup>

Following the success of Tung-Shan River Park, Chen continued to plan other works. Two sports parks were planned under his direction—Ilan Sports Park and Lo Tung Sports Park. The former was finished in 1989, the latter in 1996. They have rather different designs yet both won national recognition as well.

Ilan Park was supervised by Chen Dingnan. It was Taiwan's first park combined with multiple sports facilities. In 1991 the Taiwan Provincial Olympics were held in Ilan. The Ilan sports park won public recognition for its good design. Again Chen was closely involved in the construction process. One story concerned the trees planted in the park; it was said that Chen measured the trees to make sure that each was spaced the same distance and trimmed to the same height. People joked that the perfect arrangement of those trees symbolized the administration style of Chen Dingnan—efficient, perfectionist, and somewhat obsessed with small details.

The second sports park, Lo Tung Park, was planned by Chen Dingnan and finished by the following magistrate, Yu Hsyi-kun. It was designed by Takano, another Japanese landscape company, and became the biggest city park in Taiwan. Soon after its opening, Lo Tung Park and Tung Shan River Park became the two focal tourist sites of Ilan County. As one real estate sign said, Lo Tung Park was the "pride of the Ilan people." The surrounding area soon became the most expensive real estate in the county.

Quite different from Tung Shan River Park's ornamented and manicured style, Lo Tung Park was meant to be more "natural." It is composed of different landscape elements drawn from American wildness, Chinese rockeries, and Taiwanese old streets. Both parks attracted criticism as to whether they truly represented the essence of Taiwanese folk culture.<sup>33</sup>

Admiring the vision of the Ilan government, the Elephant firm decided to relocate to Ilan during the construction of Tung Shan River Park. Their second project was the new County Hall, built in 1997. The firm endeavored to search and gather "traditional Minnan architectural elements."<sup>34</sup> Their design for the county hall was a three-story building with red bricks, carved wooden windows, long narrow hall ways, a courtyard and garden, all of which were coded elements of the traditional Taiwanese architecture. According to the

architects, there were three principles at work in the design for the building—1. the county hall and its yard must look like a park and serve leisure function; 2. It must appear welcoming to all people; 3. It must symbolize the local culture.<sup>35</sup> In order to manifest its locality, the architects emphasized that only raw materials produced in the Ilan County, such as bricks, masonry and lumber were used.

The county hall attracted a lot of attention from journalists, academics, and the public. One author wrote in his biography about Yu Hsyi-kun:

Situated in the geometric center of Lan-yang plain, the Ilan County Hall, built of Qing-shui red bricks and stone walls, and drawing on traditional architecture, has changed the stereotypes of bureaucracy held by common folks.

For a novice tourist, they might think that the three-story building, which is surrounded with a green lawn, decorated porches, winding hallways, and rockeries, is a newly-built five-star hotel. . . .

The county hall, which was finished in the second term of Yu Hsyi-kun, is the best illustration of his political style: instead of authoritarianism, what the county government has is the long lost hospitality and sincerity (which used to be an essential part of Taiwanese folk tradition.) In short, the disposition of the County Hall is closely tied to the main theme of Yu's various policies.<sup>36</sup>

Following the County Hall, the Elephant firm began its third project in Ilan. Atayal Bridge was built in October of 1997, named after the largest aboriginal group in Ilan to "honor the tribe and to show how we Han people respect other ethnic groups."<sup>37</sup> The designers of the bridge took their main inspiration from traditional Atayal symbolism. The blue bow-like road lamp symbolized the bows of Atayal men, whereas the dark orange viewpoints on the sideways imitated the baskets used by Atayal women. Interestingly, the symbolism was drawn from anthropological studies of the Atayal tribe's hunting tradition.

The next project that the firm took, and by far the most controversial and ambitious, was the new Erh-chieh Wanggong Temple. The original Erh-chieh Wanggong Temple, built in 1929, was among the most popular temples in Ilan. Located on the Lan Yang river front, the temple attracted many followers who came to the temple for blessing before crossing the river.

In 1986, the temple committee decided that the old temple was not spacious enough to accommodate its increasing number of followers. They decided to renovate the temple. In the conventional sense, it would have meant to tear down the old building and rebuild a new one at the same location. Also as with most other Taiwanese temple committee, the leaders of the temple took several trips to study the architecture styles of other temples. Finally they decided on a Wanggong temple in Tainan as the model



for their new construction.

Due to its significance and fame, however, some people contended that the original building characterized an important keystone of temple architecture in Ilan, and thus should be preserved even though it was not a "national registered heritage site." The county government and the cultural office intervened, expressing their concerns over the preservation issue and encouraging the temple committee to find an alternative option to demolishing the whole structure. Magistrate Yu attended the annual meeting for the temple community and expressed his hopes that the new temple design would be distinctive. Yu said, "The renovated temple should have its own characteristics, based on far-sighted vision and enduring materials. We want to give our next generation a cultural property that will last for more than a thousand years."<sup>38</sup>

Accordingly, the committee decided to open the design selection process. They solicited proposals from professional architects and let the community people make the final decision. In the following year, the Elephant's proposal was approved unanimously in the community meeting. The old temple would be moved and preserved; the model for the new temple was displayed in the community center, with illustrations of the final design. This decision was contentious, however. The unconventional form of the design, which had two curved side-wings and a high-ceiled worship center, did not resemble any of the existing temples in Taiwan. Therefore its authenticity and religious validity came under attack.

According to the designer, they wanted to build a temple in accordance to the local demands. The temple was to be a part of community life. It had to preserve a sense of sacredness, but also be innovative in its cultural form. The designer claimed that the temple was meant to resemble the roundhouse Zhangzhou, which was the "original homeland" in mainland China of most Erh Chieh people. Yet some criticized that the model of the new temple evoked a sense of the Japanese shinto temple.

Interestingly, most criticism of the new temple's innovative design came from outside the community. The local people themselves did not seem to be troubled by the question of authenticity; whether the new architecture fit the image of the traditional Taiwanese temple did not concern them. There were actually three "temples" at the location for the time being. One was the designer's miniature model for the new temple, which was exhibited on the first floor of the community kindergarten. The second was the temporarily emptied old temple, waiting to be remodeled into a community center or museum. The third one was a temporary, poorly constructed building, with more than one hundred deities on the offering table. When I asked the manager of the temple which one was the "real" temple, he gave me an interesting answer: "well, what do you think? There is a Taiwanese

saying that 'wherever there are gods, there is a temple.' Look at these three, which one has gods in it?"

The Elephant's cooperation with community residents was not entirely smooth, however. Upon completing their design of the Temple, the Elephant had wished to impose their aesthetic vision onto the whole community, first through a beautification project of the Erh-chieh Canal and its surrounding green belts, and then proceeding to the street designs. They had planned to relocate to Erh-chieh to carry out their vision of a distinctive Taiwanese community. Yet an opposing voice emerged within the community, mainly from the Erh-chieh Cultural and Educational Promotion Association (*Da Erjie wenjiao cujin hui*) organized by middle-age, non-partisan, community residents. Members of the Association first proposed the canal beautification project in 1996 and later obtained governmental funding for such construction. The Elephant heard of the plan and viewed it as a rare opportunity to implement their vision. The Association however declined the Elephant's intervention. Some core members of the Association commented on several occasions that the Elephant "has taken away our Temple; now they want to take our Canal too!" They told me that the Elephant's envisioning of the community landscape was not quite the same as that of the community people. "The Elephant said they wanted to coordinate the design of the canal with that of the temple; yet what really need to be coordinated are our historical memories, not the lifeless codes of architecture." When the Elephant first contacted the community regarding the Temple project, the residents were rather intimidated by their professional knowledge and thus inclined to agree everything proposed by those architects. "After several years of self-learning, we too can do blueprints now" they proudly declared. The Association thus decided to take full charge of the canal project and chose to cooperate with a different architect firm. "The Elephant has their own imagination of Erh-chieh; their plan was to use the Temple as the center of the community, then develop an all-embracing project of a coordinated community aesthetics; yet the Association feels that this is *their* community, not the Elephant's," explained a young culture worker familiar with community affairs.

### ILAN RESIDENTIAL HOUSE PROJECT

In addition to public construction, the county government extended their visions to private residences. As early as Chen Dingnan's time, the county government had already attempted to define the "style" for an Ilan vernacular architecture. In 1995 Magistrate Yu first proposed the "Ilan Residential Housing Project" (*Yilan cuo*). Yu felt that Ilan should develop its own unique architecture in contrast to the homogeneous architectural landscape of Taiwan. "Cultural landscape is the physical representation of a local culture," said Yu. "In order to make Ilan the most cultured, most humanistic, and most

colorful county, we will have to do a lot of work... the Ilan House Project is one of the essential steps in building a new Taiwanese culture."<sup>39</sup>

After many discussions and meetings with architects, the project of "building Ilan's houses" was proposed. According to the committee, there were several principles to define the "Ilan House:" 1. It must reflect the special geographical situation of Ilan; 2. It must be environmentally friendly; 3. The landscape design must blend well with its natural environment; 4. The construction materials must come from the Ilan county; 5. A sloping roof must be used to adjust to Ilan's rainy climate. In sum, the Ilan House, shaped by its regional cultural flavors, would be the model for a vernacular architecture of Ilan's future.<sup>40</sup>

Ten blueprints were chosen to build the first generation of the "Ilan Houses." Halted by various problems, however, only three of these were actually built. The Kamalan house, owned by a high-school teacher, was probably the most renowned. Its aesthetic idea evoked the images of a disappeared plain aboriginal tribe Kamalan, which inhabited the Ilan region before the Han people arrived.

According to the designer, Taiwan had a different climate from mainland China. During the past thousands of years, the Kamalan people had adapted to the unique climate of the Lan Yang Plain, which was humid and rainy with frequent storms in the summer. Nonetheless, the Kamalan culture and the prevailing architecture style on the plain were destroyed by Han immigrants. "The Han architecture does not reflect the special climate and geography of the Lan Yang plain. I have had to seek out the Kamalan architectural tradition from historical documents and to reconstruct the new Ilan House based on Kamalan's cultural characteristics," said the designer.<sup>41</sup>

There are several architectural elements in the house associated with Kamalan symbols: 1. The walls are narrow at bottom and flared out to the pitched roof, which was a design by the Kamalan tribe to avoid heavy rain from permeating into the basement. 2. The "rooster tail" style roof was a modification of the grassy roof of Kamalan houses. 3. The design entailed an outdoor staircase because Kamalan people lived on the second floor, saving the ground floor for their herds.<sup>42</sup>

The owner of the house was an avid advocate of the Taiwanese nationalist movement. He believed that the "Ilan house is a Taiwanese house. During Taiwan's history there have been six or seven different masters. It is a shame that none of Taiwan's past architectural cultures have had any historical continuity. They changed with every change of ruler. The most unfortunate group of all was the indigenous people. They can't even find any trace of their architectural culture. By building my family house I hope to conduct an experiment in calling public attention to the indigenous culture and to establish a distinctive style for Taiwanese architecture."<sup>43</sup>

Because of this sense of commitment regarding his house, the owner kept it open to any interested visitor. The second floor of the house was used for a community library. Its collection included books on Taiwanese history and anti-KMT political publications.

It should be noted that the "Ilan residential house project" was a curious combination of both a lost homeland and an unattainable utopia.<sup>44</sup> By emphasizing the traditional concept of a harmonious relationship between the house and the land, the design elements of the Ilan house emerged as a reaction against the characterless modern high rises. Ironically though, the commodification of land in contemporary Taiwan made the project only affordable for affluent landowners.

These examples of the "New Architecture" have become the icons of Ilan's regional identity and the focal sites for tourist industry. To give visitors a better sense of Ilan's cultural landscape, a "cultural map of Ilan" was produced to promote all the revitalized or newly-built architectural projects sponsored by the county government. This is an example of how architecture could be used to showcase the government's progress. As Holston wrote of the modernist city:

"On the one hand, such an expansion [of the concept of the political to include daily life and especially the home] might open new arenas for political action, involving issues related to residence . . . issues marginal to the traditional political arena . . . In this possibility, the modernist city generates new and subversive political identities among those usually excluded from power. On the other hand, one could view state-sponsored architecture and master planning as new forms of political domination through which the domains of daily life, previously outside the realm of politics, become targets for state intervention."<sup>45</sup>

## COMMUNITY-MAKING PROGRAM

Yu once said that the whole county of Ilan was in itself a "big community."<sup>46</sup> Based on this conviction, he was the most supportive county magistrate of the "Integrated Community-Making Program" implemented by the Council for Cultural Affairs in 1995.<sup>47</sup> In 1995 and 1996, under the CCA's direction each county in Taiwan was mandated to select one representative community to participate in the annual "National Festival of Cultures and Arts." The Ilan county government broadened the level of participation. It asked each township office to recommend one community. After several discussions, fourteen communities were chosen to be the "seed communities" in this state-sponsored year-long community project.

The enthusiasm of the Ilan county government in embracing CCA's community policy is reminiscent of a similar project in Tono, Japan. Ivy described the efforts of the city council "to create a 'museum-park city' (*hakubutsuko* *toshi*) in which small neighborhood centers would double as museums, preserving the varied arts, crafts, artifacts, and narratives of the local. The entire region would, in effect, become a museum. . . ."48 Tono's urban planning was based on the configuration of the city as "the homeland of Japanese ethnology."<sup>49</sup> Similarly, the Ilan government's earnest support of the state-sponsored community making project was motivated by its self-positioning in Taiwan's regional politics. As stated in a previous chapter, the term "community" had different connotations in different contexts; its degree of geographical inclusiveness varied. Yet, regardless of its location, "community" was always associated with warm, "fuzzy" feelings of belonging and served as reminders of a pre-modern period. Thus, by claiming that Ilan was a big community Yu Hsi-kun's implicit reference was the impersonal Taipei metropolis. This statement positioned Ilan in a sharp contrast to Taipei, the latter being an industrial, impersonal, and alienated city while the former an agricultural, human-centered, and sustainable landscape. This contrast granted Ilan a unique position in Taiwan's regional politics through which the county government could accumulate cultural capital and reverse its economic decline. Since the concept of community was so central to Ilan's economic revitalization, it thus made perfect sense that its county government transformed CCA's community policy into an integrated, county-wide project.

Ilan's efforts on community building actually began earlier than the implementation of the CCA policy. In the National Cultural Festival of 1994, Ilan used *Guishan* (Turtle Island) as their focus. Turtle Island, a turtle-shape rock island laying offshore, has long been the symbol of Ilan. It is visible from almost every corner of the county and thus its ubiquitous presence has become a frequent trope of longing and returning in the literature of Ilan's native writers.

The Turtle Island was claimed by the military during the 1950s; the original inhabitants were relocated to a coastal village. Over the past four decades no civilian was allowed to land on the island; the county government did not have any control over it either. Therefore the objective of 1994's cultural festival "Come back to us, Guishan!" transmitted the intention of reclaiming this land. The theme of longing for the lost island permeated the program of the festival. *Guishan The Big Turtle* was the symbol for the community attachment of Ilan locals. Yet, its symbolic meaning was further heightened by a sense of its loss and untouchable presence.

In the following year, the government chose to focus on a different community, Yu-tien, which was famous for its traditional lion dancing. The cultural office and the CCA marketed Yu-tien's "rural essence" by publicizing

its community lion-dancing troupes, promoting its agricultural products, renovating a grass-roof hut, and designing a one-day package tour of "country life experience." Additional funding was spent on road paving and "community beautification" (i.e. tree planting and household clean up). Yu-tien was subsequently transformed from an agricultural village to a "model community."<sup>50</sup> Its national fame was reflected in the real estate market. Soon after the national cultural festival, some developers used Yu-tien to market their housing project in the surrounding areas.

Yu-tien's instantly gained celebrity inspired many other similarly depressed towns and villages in Ilan. In the end of 1995 when the Ilan Cultural Office planned to select a new location for the cultural festival for the following year and called for proposals from township governments, every town expressed a strong interest in participating in the project. It became a county-wide program, involving fourteen communities from every township.

To implement the community-building project, the Ilan county government appointed a professional group, or "planning troupe" composed of architects, urban planners, or scholars, to help each community develop their "local specialty." The goal was to strengthen the locality of each community by "reviving" their distinctive local resources. Ideally those local resources, including handicrafts, huts, farming, and ritual performances, would become the bases for collective celebration, and thus the ground for community identity. Moreover, a consolidated yet diversified "Ilan community" would supposedly emerge from the combination of every distinctive local community.

This idea was manifest in the "Happy Ilan New Year festival" in February 1996. Fourteen "seed communities" presented their local performances in Ilan Sports Park, the ceremonial site for the festival. The result was highly festive. The arrangement of exhibiting communities in the New Year festival deserves further analysis. By exhibiting the community-building results during the New Year season, the most domestic holiday of the year, the Ilan county government and the planning troupes appealed to Ilanese and tourists alike with the idea of homeland.

This community spectacle was developed into the "Community Renaissance Fair" in the next year, which was sponsored by the CCA and executed by the Ilan county government. This time ten communities from Ilan participated in it, along with 15 communities from other counties in Taiwan. The fair was designed to be a "cultural carnival," in which each community would perform their distinctive culture. Three foreign communities, from Germany, Japan, and Seattle (Fremont), were invited to the fair and exchanged their experience and community lives with their counterparts in Taiwan. The fair showed that Taiwan, although being a small island, was a diversified nation. "Various cultures and various industries are presented in the activity of 'Community Day.'"<sup>51</sup>

The community fair was the climax of the CCA's community-building efforts. It also called out some underlying uncertainty, however. One of the most pressing changes was that Chen Chi-nan, who was then the deputy director of the CCA and a prominent advocate of the community-building policy, resigned before the fair opening. Therefore a few community activists questioned in the meeting afterward whether the central government would now switch its focus, and how would local communities possibly sustain themselves without being too vulnerable to the constant policy shifts of Taiwan's politics.

The political swings did hit community development in general, yet a positive breakthrough occurred in Ilan's community building process. In September 1997, Chen Chi-nan was appointed to be the chief executive of Yang-shan Cultural Foundation right after his resignation. Chen thought, "Ilan is the place where his dream could be realized."<sup>52</sup> Therefore he was willing to give up a prestigious official position in favor of a non-governmental foundation.

Statistics show that the Ilan county cultural office received the highest amount of funding from the central government in 1996. Considering the county's small population, this number is impressive. The major reason behind it, I believe, lay in Ilan's commitment to the community-building policy as the primary program of the CCA for several years.

John Pemberton, in his discussion of the "Mini-ization of Indonesia," suggested a similar phenomenon.

"First, local communities are remapped as essentially uniform replicas of a generic village. Although this remapping is, no doubt, part of a colonial bureaucratic legacy that determined the 'Javanese village' as a well-bounded unit within subdistricts within districts, within the New Order's intensely cultural discourse, all villages are imagined to contain, willy-nilly, explicitly ritual events aimed toward the same general end: the preservation of a broader inheritance—of 'Java.' And with this assumption of an underlying 'Javanese' identity comes a recuperated sign of difference, an appearance of 'diversity. . . . The exaggeration of difference itself, thus, becomes a celebrated feature of just the process it would counter."<sup>53</sup>

Yu's cultural policy successfully transformed Ilan's image from a rustic countryside to a "cultural county" with a livable environment. In an interview Yu proudly said that many people outside of the county had expressed their intention to move to Ilan because it was "the origin of Taiwanese culture."<sup>54</sup> One of the slogans that the county government used was "Now we have Ilan, you don't have to emigrate to New Zealand!"<sup>55</sup> Clearly the basic motivation for Yu's cultural policy was to reverse out-migration and attract population through the accumulation of cultural capital and the demonstration of

a sustainable management. There is no research data that reveals the exact number of people attracted to Ilan by its cultural administration despite the fact that professional jobs within the county remained scarce. But the "cultural sectors," including the County Culture Office, foundations, and architecture firms, did create a trend of in-migration. Most of my cultural-worker friends in Ilan were newcomers or return migrants from Taipei. Some of them were successful professionals in Taipei, tired of living an uprooted life style and delighted to have a chance to come home without having to settle for unskilled jobs as did their parents' generation. Their experiences of return were not all positive, however. Some of them soon realized that Ilan's cultural construction was based on political maneuvering and did not really emerge from the "grassroots." Once the political wind changed direction, the policy would soon collapse. The overdependence of the movement on politics and the lack of active public participation overdetermined the fate of Yu's cultural policy. There was a sense of urgency and anxiety among cultural workers toward the end of Yu's term. Once Yu left his position, his policies would surely be modified by his successor. No one was really sure what would happen when the new magistrate took over.

### CONFLICTED VISIONS, SPLIT IDENTITIES

Among all the counties of Taiwan, Ilan might be the one most enthusiastic with defining and researching its native authenticity. In 1993, the county government appointed a public relation firm in Taipei to conduct a survey "Who are the Real Ilanese?" Hundreds of questionnaires were disseminated to solicit answers from writers and scholars. The answers were diverse. Some people insisted that Ilan natives, due to the unique geography of their native place, possessed distinctive collective personality characteristics such as being introverted, persevering, and sincere. Yet others disagreed. One interviewee simply stated that there was no such thing as "Ilan characteristics."<sup>56</sup> Despite such disclaimers, however, the discussion about Ilan's native character frequently occurred in public discourse and private conversations. Even in the late 1990s, when political correctness demanded a more inclusive definition of local identity (e.g. "as long as this person identify with X, he/she is X-nese"), an exclusive or essentialist point of view still slipped into daily conversations. One local historian once commented that "the county government should appoint more native intellectuals to counter the predominance of 'outsiders' in most cultural plans."<sup>57</sup> The "outsiders" referred to here included those who were born outside but had resided in Ilan for ten or even twenty years. Conversely, those who were born in Ilan yet had permanently relocated to other places would still be seen as "authentic Ilanese." In this sense, the definition of Ilanese paralleled the fundamentalist view of the Taiwanese in the 80s.<sup>58</sup>

Interestingly, many "authentic Ilanese" did not feel prideful about their "cultural county" as much as those "outsiders" did. For example, on April 13, 2000 the China Times published a letter entitled "Salute to the Ilanese demeanor; let's learn from them." The author praised the "democratic attitude" of Ilan politicians and urged the readers to learn from them.<sup>59</sup> The next day, however, a civil servant from Ilan responded by saying, "we Ilan natives probably feel differently about our county than outsiders, whose perception of Ilan comes only from the promotion of mass media . . . Ilan's economic construction is falling behind other regions; many residents are actually considering voting for a different party in next election."<sup>60</sup>

During my six months of fieldwork, I heard both positive and negative views regarding the culture-oriented policy of Magistrate Yu. The debate reached its climax during the county magistrate campaign. The KMT campaign attacked Yu's policy, also assumed to be the general policy of DPP, as being superficial and showy. As one poster criticized, Ilan could not afford the luxury of those cultural activities because Ilan county did not have any significant industry and enough income tax to support them. Ilan was not just a "backyard garden" for urban tourists for weekend consumption, it said. Ilan needed to have its own infrastructure and a solid industrial and business base to "keep the Ilan youth in our homeland."

The attacks seemed effective. Although the DPP candidate won the campaign, many people told me that for the first time in sixteen years they actually took seriously the KMT campaign slogans. One small businessman in his early thirties told me, in an angry tone, that the image of beautiful Ilan was created by a bunch of outsiders who desired to realize their fantasy and did not listen to the voices from the bottom. Even within the elite there were conflicts. In a conference on Ilan's architecture movement, a local architect questioned why most of the significant architecture projects were taken by the architects from outside. He asked, "Is this really Ilan's local movement . . . ? Why are there so few *local* architects involved?"<sup>61</sup>

Despite those challenges, however, an equally significant proportion of people showed their gratitude towards the changes. One woman in her mid-twenties said that she really felt proud of her home county:

"Ilan is really unique. When I was in college in Taipei, we knew that the students from Ilan were especially *tuanjie* (unified). . . . Compared to people from Hua-lien and Taitung, Ilan people feel a stronger sense of local pride. Many of my friends from Hualien have told me how envious they feel of Ilan locals. Ilan has so many distinctive constructions whereas there are virtually none visible in Huan-lien and Taitung."

Another woman in her mid-thirties said that she feels pride whenever visited by friends from other places:

"Whenever I take friends to Lo Tung sports park I feel so proud. My friends would lament that they don't have any comparable places for leisure activities in Taipei. They wished they would have been born in Ilan to enjoy such a beautiful place."

Statistics showed that Ilan people had a stronger sense of local identity than those in other counties. According to a poll made in 1997, 76.3% of Ilan residents felt a sense of pride regarding their homeland; 72% were satisfied with their county magistrate; 50.9% thought Ilan had the best quality of life—the best evaluation given to all the counties surveyed.<sup>62</sup>

In responding to the positive feedback, Magistrate Yu proudly said:

Our insistence on environmentalism, tourism, and culture have helped to invigorate the local industry. The increase of tourists has brought Ilan prosperity. . . . These policies have been a great asset in the promotion of Ilan's fame. Now many people have quite a changed view of Ilan. . . . The trajectory of Ilan county is toward a better quality of life.<sup>63</sup>

One architect who grew up in Taipei and received a master's degree from Yale University explained his choice of settling down in Ilan: "This place offers the feeling of living in a fully realized life."<sup>64</sup> Similar comments came from a county official. He gave up his job in Taipei, moved back into his old family home, and enjoyed the simple rural life in Ilan where he was able to go swimming every morning before starting work. He felt that environmental quality was more important than the amount of money one makes; apparently many county residents shared this view. Therefore despite the many aspects of "underdevelopment"—low public budget, low average income, zero growth population, lack of a four-year university, etc.—a majority of county residents felt that Ilan was the best place to live in Taiwan.

Local bureaucrats were especially proud of their accomplishments. During the first month of my work with the cultural office, I had been taken to the spots discussed in this chapter several times. On one occasion, when we drove to Atayal Bridge, an official noticed that some light bulbs on the bridge were missing. He complained that such things would have never happened under Yu's administration. He said that the uniqueness of Ilan did not derive from its natural beauty, which was more prominent in Hua-lien and Taitung. Instead what made Ilan so great was its efficient bureaucracy and administrations. Inspired by the two former magistrates, professionals involved in the culture renovation of Ilan felt that this was the place where their dreams could be fulfilled. Therefore although Ilan was not the birthplace of all the professionals participating in the project, some of them had decided to make this place their permanent home.

## CREATING THE CANON OF ILAN CULTURE

On a sunny day in August, an American friend visited me in Su-ao, the southernmost town of Ilan county. While waiting for the train to Taipei, an old man approached us. It was probably our foreignness that attracted him. He greeted us and asked whether we had visited some of the places in Ilan. I asked him where the best spot would be in the county. He answered that Tung Shan River Park is a must-see. Yet he added: "There are lots of beautiful places in our Ilan. It is such an honor to be born in this place."

It was near the end of my six months of fieldwork. As my "foreignness" faded I had been hearing more and more complaints about the official construction. Yet hearing the old man speak truly changed my perspective. It seemed that the visual images of the place making movement were less a representation of a unique Ilan culture than they were the demarcation of one place from the outsiders. Like the oft-heard complaint that Tung Shan River Park did not belong to Ilan but to outside tourists, Ilan's identity did not build on any explicit unique visual culture but was based on its differentiation from the outside.

Although the whole project seemed to have aroused more appreciation from the outside than from county residents, local bureaucrats were actually working on consolidating a canon for the "new Ilan culture." In May of 1998, I was involved in an interpreter-training program for the International Folklore and Folkgame Festival to be held that summer. My job was to test college students in English about their knowledge of Ilan. All of them were born in Ilan, but they all went to university elsewhere because there is no university in the county. One of my questions was designed to test their understanding of the "recent cultural accomplishments" of Ilan. To my surprise, only a few students had learned or heard about the new architectural movement. About one quarter of them could not name any of the new projects built by the county government over the past eight years. The only place they all knew was Tung Shan River Park, the site for the Folklore Festival.

When I reported this disappointing result to officials in Cultural Office, they said that they didn't expect a high performance in that regard. Instead, they wanted to use the opportunity to educate young students about the achievements of the county government. "Those kids should improve their knowledge of the county government's efforts on creating a new culture. Then, when foreign visitors ask about that, they won't be embarrassed. They also have to know where the best places are in Ilan to show to the foreigners." Based at the guideline, the training program would include some factual memorization of the projects built in recent years.

"Building a County of Life" was the title for the five-year development project for Ilan's cultural office. Throughout the collaboration process I realized that the local bureaucrats were less interested in the past glories. Rather, they were more anxious about the future. What will Ilan be in the

next century? The question was often raised during our meetings. This future orientation was also demonstrated by the biggest annual event of the county—the International Folklore and Folkgame Festival. "Children, Our Hope for the Future" said the pamphlet of the Festival. "(By hosting the Festival) the Ilan County Government hopes to build a paradise for children combining traditional arts and modern cultural resources." Because of the difficulty of claiming one cultural heritage over the others, the elite had to give up the hope that they could find any unifying force for the Taiwan nation drawn from the past. Instead, the imaginary has to be projected in the future. As Jennifer Robertson wrote in the Japan context, "The making of Kodaira today largely is a process of remaking the past and imagining the future—a process of reifying a Kodaira of yesterday to serve as a stable referent of and model for an 'authentic' community today and tomorrow."<sup>65</sup>

Robertson criticized Japan's *furusato* as "a dominant trope deployed at the national level by the state to both regulate the imagination of the nation and contain the local."<sup>66</sup> Similarly, while in Ilan the county as a whole was modeled into *the* authentic community for Taiwan, various neighborhoods within the county became showcases for its community project. In the next chapter I will move onto one of those "seed communities" and examine how the politics of nostalgia operated at the most grassroots level.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Chen Chi-nan, "Preface," in Chen Gengyao, *Wenhua Ilan Yu Hsyi-Kun [Cultural Ilan and Yu Hsyi-Kun]* (Taipei: Yuan Liu Publisher, 1998), 3.

<sup>2</sup> Chen became the executive director of Yang Shan Cultural Foundation in Ilan in September 1997, but resigned in April 1998.

<sup>3</sup> Chen Gengyao, 23.

<sup>4</sup> Edwin A. Winckler, "Cultural Politics on Postwar Taiwan," in Stevan Harrell and Huang Chun-chieh, eds., *Cultural Change in Postwar Taiwan* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994), 22.

<sup>5</sup> Winckler defines direct cultural policy as "cultural management or cultural programs."

<sup>6</sup> Huang Guozhen called the Ilan county government a "local state apparatus." See Huang, *Diyu guojia de xingcheng [Formation of a Localized State]* (Master thesis, National Taiwan University, 1998).

<sup>7</sup> Interview of Ms. Shi Yaru, Ilan, June 1998.

<sup>8</sup> The road project was resumed in 1997 and is still in construction.

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, Choi Chungmoo, "The Discourse of Decolonization and Popular Memory," *Positions* 1 (1993), 77–102.

<sup>10</sup> According to Chen Gengyao, 67 out of 101 public schools participated in this project in 1997.

<sup>11</sup> One school decided to teach the famous waist-drum dancing of northern Shaanxi, and appointed a mainland Chinese immigrant dancer to be the teacher. This decision was widely criticized by a county-based magazine and some county

councilmen for waist-drum dancing was not "Taiwanese folk art." See Chen Gengyao, 86.

<sup>12</sup> *Ilan*, 9.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>14</sup> *Dongshan He [Tung Shan River]* (Taichung: Taiwan Teacher's Association, 1994).

<sup>15</sup> Idea inspired by Robertson, 5.

<sup>16</sup> Quoted from Yu's talk at the opening ceremony of the County History Library, 1993.

<sup>17</sup> Lisa Yoneyama, *Hiroshima Traces: Time, Space, and the Dialectics of Memory* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 34.

<sup>18</sup> This caused a controversy among different social groups in Ilan, whether Ilan's history only began with the Han settlement.

<sup>19</sup> Chen Gengyao, 128.

<sup>20</sup> Rutheiser, *Imagineering Atlanta*, 19–20.

<sup>21</sup> Because of its shorter history of Han settlement in comparison to the other old towns in Taiwan, Ilan only has one historical site designated by the central government. Therefore, to preserve the "significant historical buildings specific to Ilan's local history," the county government collaborated with the Urban Planning Foundation to preserve and promote a few architectural sites in the county. Their original plan would have included 35 sites, yet the only one worked out was The Museum of Ilan's Political Settlement.

<sup>22</sup> *Ilan shezhi jinian guan [Documentary of the Establishment of the Museum of Ilan's Political Settlement]* (Ilan: The Memorial Hall of Ilan's Political Settlements).

<sup>23</sup> Chen Chi-nan, *Minsheng Bao* January 14, 1998. The article was initiated by the criticism of the architect of the museum, Han Baode. Han criticized the new temple of Erh Chieh as a "transplanted aesthetics from Japan." Han uses Erh Chieh as an example to illustrate his doubts about Ilan's recent achievement in community revitalization and public construction. He said that "many Japanese elements were transplanted into Ilan under the disguises of Xiangtu yet most people were not aware of it... the rebuilding of Erh-Chieh temple further indicates the mimicry of Japanese festivals." see Han 1998.

<sup>24</sup> *Ilan shezhi jinian guan*.

<sup>25</sup> Novell, 8.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>28</sup> Clifford Geertz, "Afterword," in Feld and Basso eds., 261.

<sup>29</sup> See *Yuan Chien magazine*.

<sup>30</sup> Ironically most of the local bureaucrats were KMT members when Chen ruled the county. Also, a significant proportion of the budget for the park came from central government as Ilan was not able to support itself solely by the local taxation. Yet critics seemed to ignore the fact.

<sup>31</sup> *Dongshan He*.

<sup>32</sup> Although Chen has never been a KMT member, he had not joined the opposition party DPP either until July of 1993. Therefore throughout his eight-year term of Ilan magistrate, he had been an independent politician. Nonetheless, the DPP constantly appropriated Chen's accomplishments as a success in anti-KMT political movement.

<sup>33</sup> See Tien Chu-chin. Tung Shan Park has also been criticized as too "Japanese," in the sense that it incorporated too many artistic elements and made the landscape very "artificial."

<sup>34</sup> Notes from "Ilan New Architecture Movement" conference, Ilan: Dec 13, 1997.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> Lin Zhiheng, Lanyang zhi zi You Xikun [The Son of the Langyang Plain—Yu Hsyi-kun] (Taipei: Tianxia Publisher, 1998), 19–20.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 238.

<sup>38</sup> *Erh-chieh Feng Qing*, 19.

<sup>39</sup> Preface to *Ilan cuo tuji (The Collection of the Blueprints of the Ilan Houses)* (Ilan: Ilan County Government, 1997).

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> Notes from the "Ilan New Architectural Movement Conference," Ilan, Dec 12–13, 1997.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> Idea inspired by Ivy's discussion of the city planning of Tono. See Ivy, chapter 4.

<sup>45</sup> James Holton, *The Modernist City: An Anthropology Critique of Brasilia* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1989).

<sup>46</sup> Chen Gengyao, 34

<sup>47</sup> The details of the "Integrated Community-Making Policy" are described in chapter 2.

<sup>48</sup> Ivy, 102.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> *Community database and interview records*, 58.

<sup>51</sup> Chen Gengyao, 332.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.* 305.

<sup>53</sup> John Pemberton, *On the Subject of "Java"* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 238–239

<sup>54</sup> *Yuan Chien Magazine*.

<sup>55</sup> New Zealand was used here, instead of the US, because its placename *Niuxilan* rhymes with Ilan (*Yilan*) in Chinese. Also New Zealand was the second favorite country—next to the US—of immigration for Taiwanese people.

<sup>56</sup> Huang Guozhen.

<sup>57</sup> Conversation, June 1998.

<sup>58</sup> As some have noted, the "native place" or tongxiang, signifies an important marker for people to formulate their local identity in Taiwan. In big cities such as Taipei and Kaohsiung, migrants from other counties form their native-place organizations (*tongxianghui*), which often play an important role in political mobilization. Native-place student clubs are also active in universities. In Ilan's case, lanyouhui (Ilan student club) exists in every major university and provides network for migrants from Ilan. For a thorough discussion on the native-place sentiment and its social functions in cities, see Bryna Goodman, *Native Place, City, and Nation: Regional Networks and Identities in Shanghai, 1853–1937* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 1995).

<sup>59</sup> Chen Xinyan, "Yilanren fengfan, dajia duo xuexi," *China Times*, Apr 13, 2000.

<sup>60</sup> Li Jinshan, "Minzhong kengei jihui, gedi douyou qingliu" China Times, Apr. 15, 2000.

<sup>62</sup> Rutheiser, 40.

<sup>61</sup> Notes from "New Architectural Movement."

<sup>62</sup> *Yuan Chien Magazine*.

<sup>63</sup> *Yuan Chien*, November 15, 1995, 100–101.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

<sup>65</sup> Robertson, 5.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

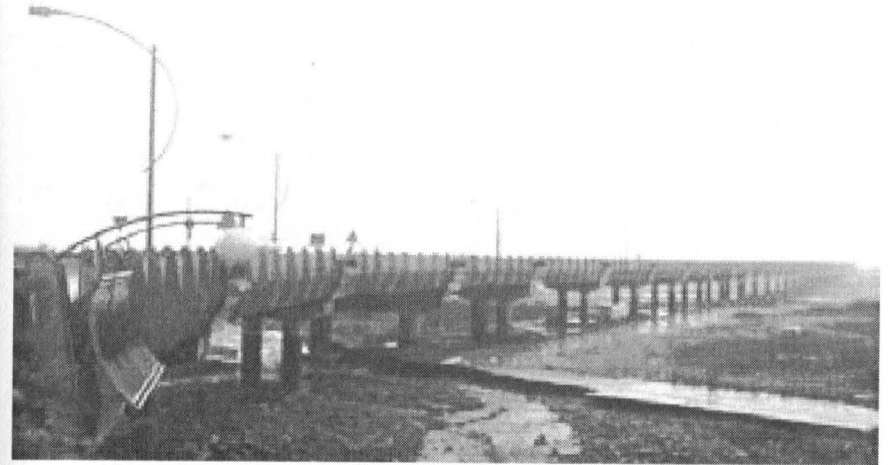


Fig. 1. Atayal Bridge

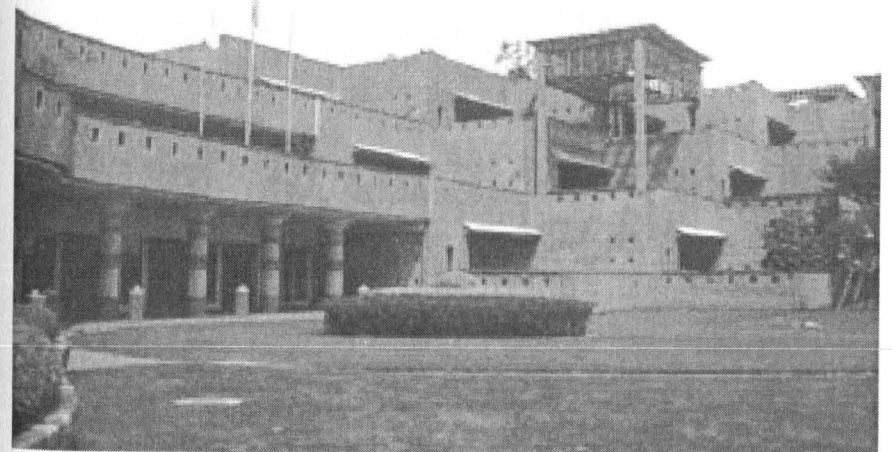


Fig. 2. the Ilan County Hall





Fig. 3. Minnan-style Roof Garden, the Ilan County Hall



Fig. 4. Erh-Chieh Temple, after Relocation



Fig. 5. The Kamalan House (I)



Fig. 6. The Kamalan House (II)

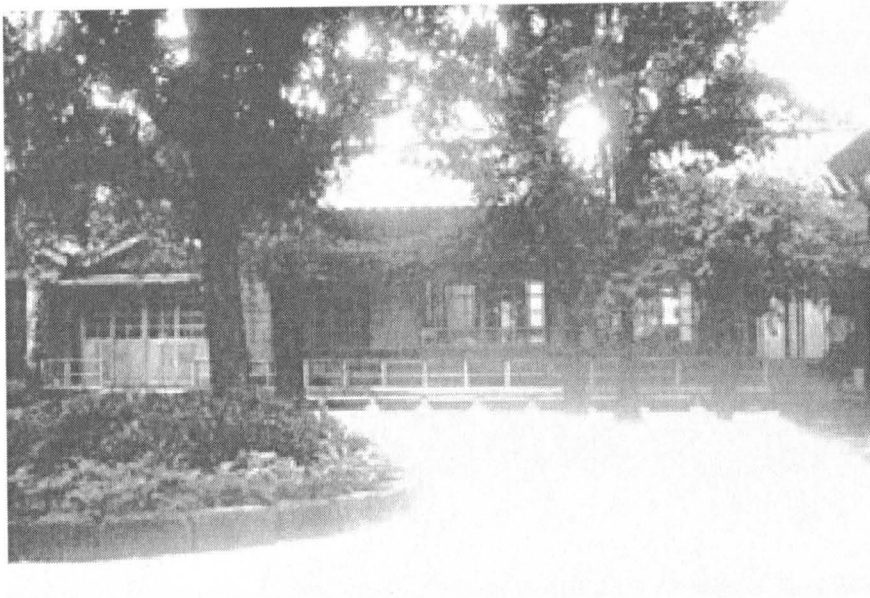


Fig. 7. The Museum of Ilan's Political Settlement

## CHAPTER 5

# SEARCHING FOR AN AUTHENTIC COMMUNITY

**I**N LAST CHAPTER I HAVE DESCRIBED THE COMMUNITY-MAKING POLICY OF ILAN County, in which fourteen “seed communities” were chosen in 1995 to develop their local specialty through the professional assistance of government officials and architects. In this chapter I demonstrate how this project operated in Baimi, a stone-mining neighborhood of Suao Township.<sup>1</sup> Since the state advanced its “Integrated Community Making Program” (*Shequ Zongti Yingzao*, hereafter SZY) in 1995, Baimi has often been praised as the most active community in Ilan County.<sup>2</sup> In describing the outcomes, the contentions, and the aspirations involved in Baimi’s community building process, this chapter examines how different forces from national, county, and local levels have intersected in a specific locale. Through “collective effort,” a community named “Baimi” emerged in Taiwan’s cultural landscape in the late 1990s.

### INVENTION OF “LOCAL CULTURE”

It was the afternoon of August 8, 1998; from every aspect it seemed like any other ordinary summer day in Baimi. The road was dusty as usual; heavy trucks frequently passed by, loaded with limestone or oil. Once in a while the regular rhythm of the grinding machines in the stone-powder factory across from the community association building would be interrupted by the whistles of the cargo trains from about a mile away. One elderly resident stepped into the air-conditioned office to photocopy his personal documents, and to enjoy the precious cool and calming space in this steaming area. On the couch inside the office however, four community activists and an anthropologist were discussing an urgent request made to this small volunteer organization: They had just received phone calls from the

Construction Bureau of Taipei City government, Luodong Rotary Club,<sup>3</sup> and a team of enthusiastic business students led by their professor. All of them had heard of the fame of "Baimi Mujicun (Baimi wooden-clog village)" and planned to visit and observe (*canguan*) the supposedly newly-revived traditional "Baimi muji chanye (wooden-clog enterprise)" the day after. The bureaucrats of Taipei City government were especially eager to learn the experience of "managing community affairs" (*shequ jingying*) from these Baimi pioneers.

Despite the high expectations of these prospective visitors, there was virtually *nothing to see* at the moment. The stock of wooden clogs made during the previous period of fervent activity were almost sold out. The community-based co-op of muji enterprise (*muji chanye hezuoshe*) had not yet started operating. The muji handicraft studio which had opened two years ago lay deserted after Mr. Qiu, a local artist and the director of the studio, married and began to pursue a "real career." As Mr. Sun, the chair of the board committee of Baimi Community Development Association (hereafter BCDA), properly put it: "we really appreciate the public attention directed toward our community; but we have endured a lot of pressure being in the spotlight. Somehow I feel that our community is *xupang* (deceptively expanded). I feel embarrassed every time I entertain visitors from Taipei."<sup>4</sup> After two hours of aimless discussion, finally it was decided that they would call Mr. Chen, Mr. Li and Mr. Qiu, the three major craftsmen, and ask them to rush the production of several pairs of wooden clogs that very night.<sup>5</sup>

This kind of awkwardness was far from incidental. During the two months of my field research in Baimi, BCDA regularly entertained visitors from different places. From TV shows similar to those on the Discovery Channel, travel sections of major newspapers, and "in-depth" guides books, people on the island learned that in the valley of Suao a small village called "Baimi" was specialized in traditional muji manufacture. This handicraft was once lost to the mass-production of plastic shoes which signaled Taiwan's modernization process; but as Taiwan entered a nativist revival, Baimi inhabitants were making efforts to retrieve their local specialty. Consequently, the increasing demand for cultural authenticity by Taiwan's consumerism compelled this little neighborhood to produce enough crafts to meet public expectation.

### A GEOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF BAIMI

Located in the southeastern valley of Suao, the town 26 km south to Ilan City and about 100 km from Taipei, Baimi has been a settlement since the late Qing period. While Nanao Xiang covers the southernmost region of Ilan County, it is mostly in the mountains. Therefore Suao marks the southern border of plain region, and the "frontier line" between Han settlement and the Aboriginal region (*fanjie*) under the Japanese rule. In the postwar admin-

istrative system, this area was divided into four *li* (neighborhoods) within Suao Township. These four *li*, Yongguang, Changan, Yongchun, and Yongle all have their own *lizhang* (neighborhood executive), however, in everyday conversation Baimi was more often used than any of the *li* names when referring to the place.

Without the attraction of traditional crafts, dust and noise would have most likely marked the appearance of Baimi for an outsider. The abundant limestone contained in the mountains surrounding Baimi Valley made this area one of the primary sites for Taiwan's cement production. In its most prosperous period, there were about seventy cement factories active in this area. Taiwan's biggest cement factory, Taiwan Cement Company, has been located here since the Japanese occupation. The mines up the mountainsides were connected to the factories, located mostly at the entrance of the valley, by trucks by way of Yongchun Road.

According to statistics from the Environmental Protection Commission, Baimi was always the dustiest area in Taiwan. I was told by one factory owner that Yongchun Road, the main street through Baimi and the only way out of the valley, accommodated about 400 trucks per day. This statistic did not include the other major source of pollution on the road—the petroleum carriers running between Suao Port and the storage plant of the Chinese Petroleum Company built in the valley during the early 1980s.

Environmental pollution combined with the decline of mining resources resulted in Baimi's continuing out-migration. The number of cement factories decreased to seventeen in 1998. The population shrank to 2,795 in 1994 as compared to 3,089 in 1990. Except for a few, most of the houses had not been renovated since the 1970s. "Our Baimi is shrinking," lamented the owner of the only store on Yongchun Road. "Not many prosperous people would stay with this polluted land" she said. She herself had two sons, both of whom moved out after high school. Out-migration after graduation from high school was a typical experience for young residents of Baimi.

### THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE BAIMI COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

In 1992 under the prevailing pressure of Taiwan's emerging environmentalism, Taiwan Cement Company signed a contract with the Ilan county government to pay six million NT each year as the "environmental protection compensation" to the polluted community. Initially, however, the money did not go directly to Baimi. It was monitored by the Township Office in Suao. The local leaders and activists were thus outraged at the way the money was deployed: "We have been victimized for many years; we have the right to fully control the monetary compensation." To this end, local leaders began to organize the Baimi Community Development Association. Ideally it would have combined the four *li* of Baimi area. Yet after a series of formal and

informal meetings, only three li, Changan, Yongle and Yongchun, were successfully integrated. Yongguang decided to organize its own community association.

Why did Yongguang refuse to join the others? The reason resided in the history of community development policy of Taiwan. During the 1970s, Taiwan started its first community-development program. This project, mainly supported by the United Nations, was to "modernize" rural or low-income neighborhoods by improving their public facilities, such as sewers, road systems, and career training programs, among other projects. Under this agenda, many neighborhoods formed their own community committees (*shequ lishihui*) to obtain the funding. Those committees were mostly controlled by local politicians, such as the lizhang or the township councilmen, and the membership was not open to most ordinary citizens.<sup>6</sup>

Both Yongguang and Yongchun had their community committees prior to 1992, whereas Changan and Yongle had not yet established any community organizations. Therefore, the leaders of Yongguang simply did not want to be "incorporated" into a new neighborhood organization and thus decided to stay out.

Soon after its establishment, the BCDA requested the county government to grant them the right to manage the funds from the compensation. They also proposed to formulate an environmental supervision committee, composed of scholars, local leaders, and factory representatives, to monitor the pollution level affected by the factories. To attract public attention, they even challenged the authority of the Ilan County Government by calling for a boycott of the 1993 county election. This act was quite significant and controversial at the time because the county magistrate Yu Hsyi-kun was highly respected by many residents within the county and well-known for his environmentalism. The move was very effective though. In 1994, the county government granted the four li full control over the compensation fund. Each li would get 1.5 million each year, which became the major financial source for the BCDA.

After the effective boycott and the success in obtaining financial support, the BCDA became the most famous community development association in Ilan. But this fame brought crisis. Some members of the BCDA told me that the effectiveness and efficiency of their administrations threatened the Suao township government. In 1995 the township government ordered the BCDA to split into three different associations. According to the official document, it was "recommended" that every li form its own community development association.<sup>7</sup> Subsequently, in the annual neighborhood meetings (*limin dahui*) that year, the residents of Changan li and Yongle li each agreed to initiate their own community associations. The reasoning for this move stated that most of the resources and power of the BCDA were controlled by the Yongchun leaders. Since those two neighborhoods did not have their own

community centers at that point, they wanted to separate from the BCDA to obtain independent funding for themselves. After a futile protest, the administrative scope of the BCDA shrank to Yongchun li only. Yet its membership did not decrease. Many old members, despite their residency, stayed on. As of 1998, it still had 182 members.<sup>8</sup>

## THE INTERVENTION OF THE STATE AND COUNTY GOVERNMENTS

From the above we have seen the initial struggles of a new community organization against its upper-level administrators. We also saw both cooperation and division among different parties at the local level, which, as is typical for Taiwan's local politics, were momentary and opportunistic, and not bound by a rigid ideology. What we have not seen so far, however, is the role of "traditional folklore," here in the form of muji manufacture, as a factor in community identity.

As a matter of fact, Baimi had not been associated with any "folk tradition" until 1995, after the national government made a dramatic shift in its community policy. Two important forces intervened in the community building process to transform Baimi into a "folklore village" from the previous progressive organization: One was the Ilan county government's community-making policy, which developed during the term of Yu Hsyi-kun.<sup>9</sup> The other was the Council of Cultural Affairs (CCA), following its famous community making program proposed in 1994.

### A BRIEF BACKGROUND OF THE CCA'S "INTEGRATED COMMUNITY-MAKING PROGRAM"

As discussed in Chapter two, the "Integrated Community-Making Program" was first advocated in 1994, prompted by president Lee Teng-Hui's consistent exhortation of community development. Lee's declaration, "in order to construct a grand Taiwan Nation, we have to start from small communities at the local level," soon became an often-quoted slogan. The CCA proposed a number of unprecedented policies and funding opportunities under the umbrella of "*Shequ Zongti Yingzao*" for local communities to consolidate and strengthen their community sentiments. The ultimate goal, as it emphasized, was to "enliven the Taiwanese community into a vivid corporate body."<sup>10</sup>

SZY was probably the most popular governmental policy in postwar Taiwan. It fit well with the collective sentiment of Taiwan's folk society during the 1990s. A survey made in 1994 showed that the population of Taipei City had been decreasing since 1989, emigration being the main factor.<sup>11</sup> In the same article, the journalist suggested that the major reason for the increasing urban-to-rural or back-to-the-land migration was a "prevailing dissatisfaction about the deteriorating quality of urban life." Disappointed with their experience in the cities, these returning migrants went back to their hometowns

and began to examine their birthplace with a new perspective. This explains the widespread support of the CCA's innovative policy. Right after the SZY was advocated, *shequ* (community) became a pervasive term in Taiwan's public discourse. Many community-based organizations have proliferated since 1994. Many conferences concerning community-minded issues have been held. "Taiwan has entered the era of shequ," exclaimed a famous journal.<sup>12</sup>

In claiming to be the most "nativist" county in Taiwan, Ilan county government was most enthusiastic in advancing the SZY. County Magistrate Yu Hsyi-kun announced on May 8, 1995 that SZY would become the major policy direction integrating governmental activity for the following year<sup>13</sup>. On October 24, Yu invited Ilan's twelve township executives for breakfast, and encouraged each town to nominate one community to participate in the "Happy Ilan New Year" festival of 1996. This act then led to the formulation of the "seed community" project. Fourteen communities were chosen by the end of 1995 to be the "seeds" for SZY, each was granted 1.8 million NT and were put under the guidance of a regional planning group or consultant company by the county government.<sup>14</sup> The outcome of the seed community project was displayed in the "Community Renaissance Fair" in 1997, which was also the climax of Ilan's SZY process. After the fair, however, the county-wide enthusiasm started fading, as seed communities gradually withdrew. In April of 1998 when I participated in a workshop reviewing the experience of SZY held by the Ilan Cultural Center, only two community-based organizations attended the meeting; one of which was not even involved in the seed community project.<sup>15</sup>

#### THE EMERGING "BAIMI MUJI VILLAGE"

Due to its fame in Suao Township, Baimi became involved in the seed community project in 1995.<sup>16</sup> At the same time the idea of developing or revitalizing a traditional handicraft industry was first proposed by Chen Chinan, Deputy Director of the CCA. Attending a conference on cultural industry held in Yu-tien, the "exemplar community" of Ilan county at that time, Chen proposed that community-making movement should start with revitalizing the local specialty (*tese*) of a community. Reviving vanished traditional crafts would capture the attention of community people and provide a symbol of the community sentiment.<sup>17</sup> Chen's idea was soon disseminated to the local people. The Ilan county government also took this idea as part of the design for the New Year Festival in 1996. At the "Happy Ilan New Year" festival, fourteen communities participated, each displaying their "cultural specialty." For the first time Baimi presented itself as a "Muji Village," selling hundreds of wooden clogs during the festival period.

Initially, however, there were several options from which the BCDA could have chosen to develop their "local specialty." They could have focused on

the stone-mining industry, which was based on the primary natural resource for this area. They could also have chosen to pave a deserted trail, whose history was said to be traced back to Qing Dynasty, and make it a tourist attraction. But the association decided in the end to use muji as their symbolic craft. They appointed a local artist Mr. Qiu to teach children to paint wooden clogs and advertised the *Baimi muji* as folk crafts rather than practical objects.

Why was muji manufacture chosen as symbolic of the community sentiment? The community residents often reiterated their endearing memory of wearing wooden clogs in their childhoods during the 1950s. Also, it may be interesting to point out that wooden clogs were first introduced to Taiwan during the Japanese period. Several journalists reported that the Baimi area had been famous for making muji in the 1950s, blessed by the presence of abundant wood in the nearby mountains. In reality, however, Baimi had only one muji factory in the 1950s. The craftsman, Mr. Chen, was born in Luodong and trained there. He moved into Baimi in 1955 to start his own business. The factory closed in 1961, defeated by the mass production of plastic clogs. Mr. Chen then worked in Luodong to manage a logging company.

According to Chen, although short-lived, his muji manufacture was quite popular during the years of the factory's operation. He was able to make one hundred or so pairs of muji per day. The profit was very good by the living standard at that time. Because of his demand for wood, he supported quite a few neighbors who made their living on his muji factory as well. They logged the surrounding forests and sold the lumber to Mr. Chen. Because logging was illegal for ordinary people, they had to play hide-and-seek with the forestry bureau. This experience became a local legend in their collective memory.

Once proposed, BCDA managed to make muji their cultural symbol. In 1997 at the "Community Renaissance Fair," Baimi and other nine communities from the Ilan County displayed their accomplishments and experiences in SZY. The association staged a musical based on Baimi's local history, including the origin of the name "Baimi" and the "glorious past" of the local muji manufacture. Their show appealed to a large audience. Several hundred pairs of painted muji were sold, which was a big financial success for this budget-tight association.

Encouraged by their success at the Fair, the association persisted in this new direction. In the July of 1997 with the assistance of Yangshan Cultural Foundation, the Ministry of Economics granted Baimi two million NT to promote muji manufacture. Enabled by this funding, one room in the community center was remodeled into the "*Baimi Mujiguan*" (Muji Exhibit Hall) to display the history and styles of muji. The "*Baimi Muji Gongzuoshi*" (Muji Handicraft Studio) was established in an emptied house, where the

craftsmen, Mr. Chen and Mr. Li, both local residents, offered a course on muji-making skill. Mr. Qiu, the local artist, was appointed by the BCDA as director of the studio. Then in June, 1998, BCDA renovated six abandoned townhouses into the "Muji Jiefang" (Muji Shopping Mall), where the "muji Hezuoshe" (Community-based Co-op of Muji Enterprise) was planned and established in November of 1998.

As the process went on, the Baimi Muji began to obtain its national popularity. TTV, one of the three major national channels, released a documentary about the community-making process of Baimi in December of 1997.<sup>18</sup> In July 1998, the Ministry of Economics renewed its funding for the community-based co-op.<sup>19</sup> In September, "Baimi Shequ Zongti Yingzao Weiyuanhui" (The Committee of Community Making of Baimi) was founded. Its members included board members of the association, as well as county bureaucrats and scholars from Taipei. When I was in the field in 1998, I was often told that Baimi was one of the few communities that still persisted with the idea of SZY.<sup>20</sup> A journalist once jokingly commented: "No one except for Baimi is still playing a puppet show (*budaixi*) for the public today."

### SPECTACLE CONSUMERISM

The brief remark above actually characterized one common feature of Taiwan's recent community making movement, which I describe as "spectacle consumerism." This term refers to the fetishization and commodification of spectacle. It also implies the hasty process of production and consumption of something visible. This phenomenon certainly occurred in the frenzies of Taiwan's rapidly expanding mass media. Perhaps more interestingly, however, it has also been perpetuated by the bureaucrats and community activists. In a workshop on the experience of SZY held by the Ilan Cultural Office, the participants, regardless of their positions, unanimously criticized the restraints set up by the bureaucracy on their community-making efforts. They pointed out that community-building is a long-term process. They used their Japanese counterparts to illustrate the differences in official attitudes between the two countries. "In Japan, it often takes ten to twenty years to properly make a community. Yet here in Taiwan, the government asks for a visible outcome in one year." One local bureaucrat explained that, despite her aversion to the rule, the governmental section could not *not* ask for hasty outcome, as the annual budget report required every section to submit an assessment report every June. Therefore they needed something visible to obtain further funding.

On June 7, 1998, the opening ceremony of the "Baimi Muji Shopping Mall" was held. Remodeled from six abandoned townhouses, the Mall was divided into a studio, an exhibition room, and a retail store for the Baimi muji co-op to sell their products. Moreover, the Mall was built to "prepare things for the visitors to see." Out of the visitors the most important one was

perhaps the official from the Ministry of Economics, the institution in charge of the funding for Baimi's muji enterprise.

In the opening remarks, several speakers expressed their gratitude for the progress of Baimi. They said that they were originally concerned with Baimi's poverty, which might have led to the failure of the community-building movement. "Failure" in this context means "nothing produced for the spectatorship of the outside visitors." Yet, the speakers were all comforted by the opening of the Muji Shopping Mall. "From now on, every visitor, regardless their nationality—Taiwanese, Japanese or the Americans—will have something to see when they come to Baimi."<sup>21</sup> The Suao Township Executive commented that Baimi's accomplishment had become so visible that it would eventually become the model for other neighborhoods nearby.

The anecdote above illustrates a superficial expectation or understanding of officialdom in assessing the outcomes of a community making movement. "Making something for display" is the basic requirement to obtain and renew governmental funding. This means of assessment, however, often ignores or even suppresses the structural problems that a community faces. Therefore in Baimi what we see is a contested political history disguised under the harmonious appearance of a happy folklore village. Local community became more of a public spectacle for mass consumption than a real place with grassroots participation.

### THE DIVISIONS WITHIN THE COMMUNITY

Despite its national fame, the community itself was not all unified. Not everyone agreed with the current direction of investing most of the community resources in the muji industry. Potential crisis of division within the community association was observable on various occasions, such as conflicts that occurred in committee meetings, a declining participation of community residents in wooden clog promotional activities, and disagreements in some informal gatherings.

Local factionalism was a common phenomenon at the community level. Regular elections, whether it be neighborhood or national-level elections, were the major reason for a community to split. As one elderly man told me, whenever there was an election, there was tension. It usually took several months after an election for different factions to resolve their tension. Meanwhile, rumors circulating during the election period hardly disappeared; they often came back to haunt people in the next election.<sup>22</sup>

Baimi community is no exception. Similar to other comparable communities in Taiwan, the most severe divisions resulted from lizhang campaigns. The community association was first composed under the efforts of several local leaders. Among them Sun and Yu were perhaps the most influential figures. Yu was the neighborhood executive at that time. Working for the Taiwan Cement Company and recognized as a promising bright young man,

he was only thirty when he defeated Zhuang, another important leader of the community who had been a precinct leader between 1986–1990. Interestingly, Sun had also run in the lizhang campaign once in 1986, yet lost the battle to Zhuang. Therefore it was probably not unreasonable that when Sun and Yu collaborated in recruiting members for the Baimi community association, Zhuang, as a significant leader, was not involved from the very beginning.<sup>23</sup>

Soon after the association was established, a second division occurred. Sun was elected as chair of the board committee, which is the power center of the association<sup>24</sup>. Politically Sun and his buddies were inclined towards the opposition party, and were influenced by the environmentalist movements then prevailing in Taiwan. Between 1993 to 1995, most of the decisions made by the board were related to the pollution caused by the Taiwan Cement Company and other small factories. Some active members constantly complained about the noise, dust, and water pollution that those factories had caused in the past forty years, and demanded the enterprises to make significant improvement right away. Being employed by a major “enemy” of the community, Yu was not comfortable with the “radical” attitude held by other board members. Therefore he gradually withdrew from the association, and finally cancelled his membership in 1996.

After the decision to promote muji enterprise was made, a new division emerged. Those who took different positions than the BCDA in the first place started to question the legitimacy of this decision. They certainly had their reasons: the old muji factory was only short-lived and involved only a small portion of the community people. It has never been the basis for Baimi’s local economy. On the other hand, Baimi’s major problem, environmental pollution, had not been solved. They questioned whether it would benefit the majority of community residents to develop a declined handicraft business.

Gradually, even hard-core members started to lose their faith in the new direction. During the several meetings and informal conversation that I participated, some major leaders questioned the profitability of the muji industry and the feasibility of organizing a community-based co-op devoted to muji only. As one member once said in a board meeting:

It appeared to me that we are doing the promotion wrong way round. In the usual case, people organize a community-based corporation only when the community already has prosperous handicraft industries. Corporation would not be profitable if there is no individual store invested in the business. Look at us! Where and who in the community is making a living on wooden shoes? How can we organize a corporation under this situation?

This inner tension came out into the open in the lizhang election of June 1998. Zhuang won 329 votes and defeated Huang, who had been the lizhang at that time and also the father of the executive of the BCDA. The defeat of Huang surely was a warning sign of the disapproval of association policy by the community people. Although the discontent was never made explicit, I was told by several residents in private that they were not happy with the fact that the BCDA was controlled by only a few people. One old resident said that the association should do more work to serve the basic needs of its people, such as paving the roads, combatting the pollution, planting more trees and flowers for the community, and so on. “What is the use of wooden clogs? They are not edible anyway” he said.

Furthermore, even some of the most active members started to feel doubtful about the new direction. A core member told me that he was very unsure whether the association should invest most of its resource into the muji industry. He contended that the association should focus on “basic stuff,” such as holding regular activities for housewives, cleaning the community streets, taking care of the elderly and children, and so on. Another member said bluntly that the association had been funded by various government sections, with a budget in the millions of dollars. Yet, “did any of this money actually improve our lives? Do our people feel anything about the outcomes of these projects?”

The failure of the Lizhang election indicated a big challenge to the BCDA’s direction of community development. Yet one cannot help from asking this question: If the association was aware of the discontent prevailing among the residents, why did they persist? Far from being completely ignorant about people’s negative perceptions, the major leaders of the association knew very well that their proposals were not that well received. They even admitted on several private occasions that the criticism from different factions was not unreasonable, and rather effective. Yet, the following two structural factors originating from outside kept pushing them to work on the muji industry:

First, they said that since there was significant government funding involved, Baimi can not *not* continue on with the muji promotion. “With the abundant support from the central and county government, and from those kind scholars, we Baimi people really feel obliged to follow their instruction. We can not let our sponsors down!” Therefore, despite the criticism or doubts, the Baimi Muji Co-op was still opened in November 1998.

Second, on behalf of the association, it was impossible not to be tempted by the various funding opportunities offered by the government. Bosco observed the patronage of Taiwan’s local factionalism.<sup>25</sup> The scale of support for a local political leader often correlates to the amount of wealth s/he is capable to bring into the region. From the financial records of BCDA, it is clear that the budget went sharply up in 1997, adding two million dollars of

funding from the Ministry of Economics to sponsor the muji business. From then on, the association had gotten a few big projects, each with millions of funds, all related to muji manufacture or other community art projects. The executive of the association told me that no other community development association has obtained so much funding. They were proud of this achievement and would try their best to compete for any possible grant in the future. Yet, most of the money and prospective funding projects could be utilized only in muji-related or culture-related projects. "Most of the local people didn't realize that the money came for specific projects and could only be used to that end. Their concept of community construction stayed with older ideas, such as paving roads, building big community center, building parks and planting trees. Culture is too abstract a concept for most people," said the executive.

#### WHAT IS "COMMUNITY?"

On another sunny day in early September, CTV, one of the three national TV broadcast companies in Taiwan, sent a crew to Baimi to shoot an episode for the documentary series "Community and Children." They chose Baimi because of its national fame as a community with distinct locality. They expected that the children of Baimi would have different life styles than other urban children.

The request for assistance by a famous TV station again caused some sort of inconvenience for the association. It was to be shot on Sunday morning; most elementary school children would rather sleep late in their air-conditioned homes than doing unpaid work with a TV crew under the hot sun for a whole morning. At last, two members kindly offered their children to be volunteer actors for the crew.

I didn't follow the whole shooting process that day. I was in a volunteer training session offered by the association. We had ten students, all of them of middle-school age. The topic for that day was a slide show about Dutch clogs and a practical lesson in muji painting. When the documentary crew came by the studio, they were glad to find some "real kids" who were actually doing muji-related tasks. They stopped, took a long shot of those students painting shoes, and asked their child actors to pose beside the painters and pretend to watch closely. To heighten the credibility of the episode, they also called Mr. Li to do a muji-polishing demonstration, and asked the children to circle around the muji master, with a display of interest on their faces.

Finally the children's uncomfortable feelings burst out. They refused to reiterate any historical story about muji, although they had been properly taught in previous community training programs. Then one kid brilliantly complained: "all the TV shows are deceptive."

Ironically, the Baimi people have been very aware of the manipulative essence of "community" throughout the whole process, which just like the TV crew, consciously distorted and edited the scenes to make a realistic documentary. In a talk given to the community youth training program, Sun told the "origin myth" of Baimi.<sup>26</sup> He said "you might find the story dubious; yet if we all reiterate the same story again and again, eventually it will become the truth." Nowhere in the theories about historical writings have I found such a concise account about the constructive nature of the historical narrative! Through the process of reiteration, a "mythical community" is being formed for the outsiders. Yet, the community itself actually only exists at the level of performance.<sup>27</sup>

To return to my ultimate concern: what is community? Scholars in community studies have acknowledged that it is impossible (and even inappropriate) to summarize a uniform definition of "community." Moreover, some of them criticize the suppressive essence of "community," with which the boundaries are reified to contain a homogenous and immutable identity.<sup>28</sup> While the criticism is valid, however, it doesn't necessarily lead to a complete abandonment of the term itself in theoretical practice. As Gillian Rose proposes, "community" is a "contested idea . . . struggles over its meaning reveal much about the social, political, economic and cultural power relations of specific times and places."<sup>29</sup> If we interpret "community" as a process instead of an end-product, then instead of asking whether a bounded community exists, the real question becomes *what* the community-making process reveals to us in a specific socio-historical context.

Nancy lays out several characteristics of the "inoperative community." It is performative, "something which occurs only as it is said or done."<sup>30</sup> It defies the "will to essence," and "constitutes a resistance to all the forms and all the violence of subjectivity...It is a space the dimensions of which cannot completely be described, defined, discoursed."<sup>31</sup> Under the name of "community" created by the state program and national intellectuals, what we have actually seen is a "multi-dimensional matrix of mobile, fusing axes of identity" within which individuals take diverse, contingent, or even contradictory positions. This form of community, situated in the space of uncertainty and fluidity, is inoperative at the discursive level and always creates the possibility of questioning any existing definition of community.

#### CONCLUSION

The wooden clog business sold about 200,000NT (US\$6,250), or 1,000 pairs, each year.<sup>32</sup> The actual earnings were much lower as the profit for each pair was 50NT in 1998. The BCDA told reporters that all the money came from tourists; yet according to my observation in 1998 and 1999, at least one third of the clogs were distributed through governmental promotion. Despite the advertising efforts of mass media and the county government, most of



the visitors were not "ordinary tourists." As I recorded during the summer of 1998, visitors fell into the following categories—college students, other community organizations, voluntary groups such as the Lion's Club, and government officials; they visited Baimi primarily for "educational reasons." Out of them the Ilan International Children's Folklore and Folkgame Festivals held by the Cultural Bureau purchased some 300 pairs of Baimi wooden clogs every summer as souvenirs for the invited foreign performers. Therefore it is fair to say that the muji industry had not become the major revenue for the community. The most important reason slowing down its business, I suspect, was the unresolved environmental issues. As I have indicated, dust and noise did not disappear with the thriving folk art industry.

Yet, as some community activists repeatedly emphasized, the muji industry did create a symbol for the community to formulate "a common identity and a shared lifestyle,"<sup>33</sup> even if half of the actual practitioners lived outside of the neighborhood. As we have seen from the struggling process of the BCDA, the community association itself had very little power in confronting bureaucrats and industrial corporations. It was also hard for a community association to obtain financial support if they had remained in the environmentalist direction. Therefore it was not surprising at all that when the CCA first proposed its SZY policy, the Baimi association soon embraced it in such an enthusiastic fashion. The SZY did offer an opportunity for ambitious locals to construct their agency within the structural limitation of Taiwan's political realm.

In over-emphasizing the spectacle of "folk culture," the SZY ran the risk of ignoring the politico-economic aspects of a community. Therefore it often failed in articulating with the complex local politics. In Baimi's case, the association had been involved in a lot of political issues. Yet the process of cultural construction sanitized the contested politics and directed most of the resources to an *a-political* issue. In a different context, Rutheiser critiqued the dreamwork of city boosters and urban planners, who have created a "saccharine account" of the city Atlanta by eliminating the conflicts and contradictions buried in the city's past.<sup>34</sup> In another article he criticized Atlanta's placemaking actions "in its failure to address the political, economic, and cultural" issues of the inner city and "pose only a superficial fix to deep-rooted structural problems."<sup>35</sup> Similarly, Baimi's contested politics and severely polluted sky have been forgotten and forgiven during the process of constructing the image of a happy folklore village. Smoggy sky and myopic politicians are not what the nostalgic mechanism seeks to return!

Baimi's case also illustrates how problematic the term "community" is. Linda McDowell contends, "A community is a relational rather than a categorical concept, defined both by material social relations and by symbolic meanings. Communities are context dependent, contingent, and defined by power relations; their boundaries are created by mechanisms of inclusion and

exclusion."<sup>36</sup> The term "community," as many have pointed out, often designates "a small-scale and spatially bounded area within which it is assumed that the population, or part of it, has certain characteristics in common that ties it together."<sup>37</sup> It carries the connotations of "fuzziness," "warmth," and "solidarity." Its locality can only be comprehended in the conjuncture of knowledge production by the state, mass media, and local leaders. Baimi did not plan to be a folk craft village when its community organization was first established; yet its aspirations for economic prosperity and environmental improvement were affirmed by the popular seeking for the nation's folk tradition and rural origin.<sup>38</sup> Baimi, the place with conflicting interests and contested pasts, thus became the home of the traditional wooden clog in the cultural program of the state, a position where monetary and cultural capital would flood in. In terms of Jean-Luc Nancy, the community-making program implemented by the state and cultural workers functioned to construct a "myth of community," stabilizing the marginals, the unnamable, in a fixed and assigned position. This myth, conversely, linked well with the Taiwanese longings to regain their lost childhood memory.

One social aspect that enabled the production of Baimi's community heritage was the rise of domestic cultural tourism, in which leisure activities blended with educational cause. After the mid-1990s, a greater public awareness of local differences was prompted by the new form of traveling, which resulted in a reconceptualization of community and place.<sup>39</sup> Rural communities that were left behind from the previous economic growth began to reappraise their pasts as potential capital.<sup>40</sup> This reminds us of what Harvey argued, "Those who reside in a place (or who hold the fixed assets in place) become acutely aware that they are in competition with other places for highly mobile capital. . . . Within this process, the selling of place, using all the artifices of advertising and image construction that can be mustered, has become of considerable importance."<sup>41</sup> In the following chapter I focus on the proliferation of domestic cultural tourism to illustrate how the popular conceptualization of place has been changed through a peculiar form of postmodern traveling.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Baimi literally means "white rice."

<sup>2</sup> Although translated into "community," *Shequ* and "community" are not completely equivalent. In some context, *shequ* (or shak-ku in Hoklo pronunciation) refers to the *shequ fazhan xiehui* (community development association) of a specific community. This mixture caused a lot of confusion when SZY first descended to the local level in Ilan because many people thought that community development associations would be the primary sites for SZY.

<sup>3</sup> Luodong is the biggest town of Ilan County, ten miles north to Baimi.

<sup>4</sup> Here we may interpret "Taipei" of double-folded connotation. Taipei certainly refers to Taipei municipality, a geographical location outside of Baimi; but it also implies a place with a higher position in the political hierarchy. Therefore, the "Taipei people" are those from influential institutions such as the central government, national media, or prestigious universities.

<sup>5</sup> As a matter of fact, the craftsmen, the community workers, and the anthropologist worked until 3 o'clock in the morning. The craftsmen polished and painted the wood whereas the others nailed the leather pads onto the clogs.

<sup>6</sup> In 1990, the Ministry of the Interior changed its laws related to these community organizations. According to the new bill, a community association must be a volunteer organization, initiated by "registered residents" of a community, instead of being controlled by local leaders. Every citizen residing within the community has the right to register for membership, and to campaign for board membership.

<sup>7</sup> The distinction between a community and a li is very ambiguous, to say the least. According to the official definition, a community association is a voluntary organization formulated by the registered residents within one or several li; while li is the most basic unit in the local administration system. Each li, however, can only have at most one community association. The overlapping aspects between li and community association, in terms of membership, geographic boundary and leadership, often cause confusion and on occasion become a battle ground for different factions.

<sup>8</sup> According to the charter written by the Ministry of Interior Affairs, each household can only have one registered member. Therefore the membership of 182 actually entails 182 households, which covers a significant portion of Yongchun's population as the household number of Yongchun in 1994 was 258.

<sup>9</sup> Yu's term last eight years, from 1991–1998. I have a more detailed account on Ilan's place-making politics in chapter 4.

<sup>10</sup> *The Central Times* October 4, 1994. The original quote: "jiang Taiwan jiceng shequ jianli wei i ge you shengming de gongtongti"

<sup>11</sup> *The China Times* April 5, 1995. The data came from the Statistical Office of Administrative Yuan.

<sup>12</sup> *Yuan Chien Magazine*.

<sup>13</sup> *The China Times* May 9, 1995.

<sup>14</sup> Baimi was the exception in this case. It did not accept any professional consultant or regional planner. According to BCDA, they would rather do the planning on their own. Also, due to the previous disappointing experience of collaboration with a regional planning company, they had become suspicious about the function of any "outside" professional.

<sup>15</sup> The two communities were Erjie and Baimi. Both of their community organizations had existed prior to 1994.

<sup>16</sup> It should be noted that Baimi was not the first choice made by the Suao Township Office; instead, Nanfangao, the most populated neighborhood of Suao Township was assigned at the first place. The BCDA did not give up this funding opportunity however. It submitted their own proposal to Ilan Cultural Center. Finally Nanfangao and Baimi were both chosen as seed community projects.

<sup>17</sup> Chen Chi-nan, "Keynote Speech" delivered at the *wenhua changye* [Cultural Industry] conference. October, 1995.

<sup>18</sup> The documentary was one of the series *Crafting Our New Homeland* which incorporated ten different communities.

<sup>19</sup> Out of the thirteen communities being funded that year, Baimi was the only one without any direct involvement by outside professionals.

<sup>20</sup> The other famous community of Ilan County, Erh-chieh, was not involved in the "seed communities" project in 1996.

<sup>21</sup> This remark was made by Chen Chi-nan.

<sup>22</sup> Joseph Bosco, "Mobilization Strategies in Taiwan's Elections," in Murray A. Rubinstein, ed., *The Other Taiwan: 1945 to the Present* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1994).

<sup>23</sup> He has never joined the membership either.

<sup>24</sup> According to the regulation of community association, a board committee is elected by all the registered members. These board members then vote for the five members who make up the standing committee, which is the power center of the association. In many cases community-related affairs are designed and decided by the board. When the Baimi association was first established, all three li were included. Thus, the standing committee was composed by the three executives of the neighborhood, plus two persons—Sun and Huang—who held no political position. Sun and Huang are both residents of Yongchun. Sun was then voted as chair. According to him, he was elected because he was not in any political position at that time, which made him a more neutral candidate among the board members.

<sup>25</sup> Bosco, "Mobilization Strategies in Taiwan's Elections."

<sup>26</sup> The story begins long long ago, when a famine spread to the valley of Baimi. It is told that there was a divine figure who carried a big bowl of white rice and disseminated it to the starving villagers. The place was thus named baimiwong, meaning "barrel of white rice."

<sup>27</sup> Interestingly enough, Chen Chi-nan, the former deputy director of the Council of Cultural Affairs and the primary advocate of the nation-wide wave of community-building, was also the first person who remarked on the performative nature of the Baimi community. He said in an interview that "Baimi is a place with 'nothing.'" By "nothing" he means that the place has neither natural resources nor cultural specialties. Yet, he continued, the local residents there had put a lot of effort to make their community blossom from the impoverished soil. That is the "most invaluable and honorable spirit" in the whole process of Baimi's community movement, he commented.

<sup>28</sup> See, for example, Gillian Rose, "Imagining Popular in the 1920s: Contested Concepts of Community." *Journal of Historical Geography* 16 (1990), 425–437.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 425.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Gillian Rose, "Performing Inoperative Community: the Space and the Resistance of Some Community Arts Projects," in Steve Pile and Michael Keith, eds., *Geographies of Resistance* (London: Routledge, 1997), 188.

<sup>31</sup> Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Inoperative Community*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 35.

<sup>32</sup> Anita Huang and Kant Chang "Little Goody Two Shoes" *Taipei Review* (January 2001), 61. The average price of each pair was \$200NT in 1998.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

<sup>34</sup> Rutheiser, *Imagineering Atalanta*.

<sup>35</sup> Rutheiser, "Making Place in the Nonplace Urban Realm: Notes on the Revitalization of Downtown Atlanta," *Urban Anthropology* 26, no.1 (1997), 9.

<sup>36</sup> Linda McDowell, *Gender, Identity, & Place: Understanding Feminist Geographies* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 100.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> The case here echoes perfectly Ivy's research on Tono City in Japan. Also being a "remote" mountainous region, Tono was discovered by Japan's national travel camp and urban intellectuals as the homeland of Japanese folklore study, a desire matched by Tono's "reappraisals of [its] pasts...to boost both civic pride and outside investment" (p.101). The difference here is Tono's regional planning was built on the extensive study of Yamagita's native ethnology, whereas Baimi, with limited written source, had to invent their historical narrative to justify its "homeland status."

<sup>39</sup> Compare Andrew McRae, "The Peripatetic muse: International Travel and the Cultural Production of space in Pre-revolutionary England," in Gerald MacLean, Donna Landry, and Joseph P. Ward, eds., *The Country and the City Revisited: England and the Politics of Culture, 1550-1850* (Cambridge University Press 1999), 42.

<sup>40</sup> Compare Ivy, 101.

<sup>41</sup> Harvey, *Justice, Nature & the Geography of Difference*, 297-8.

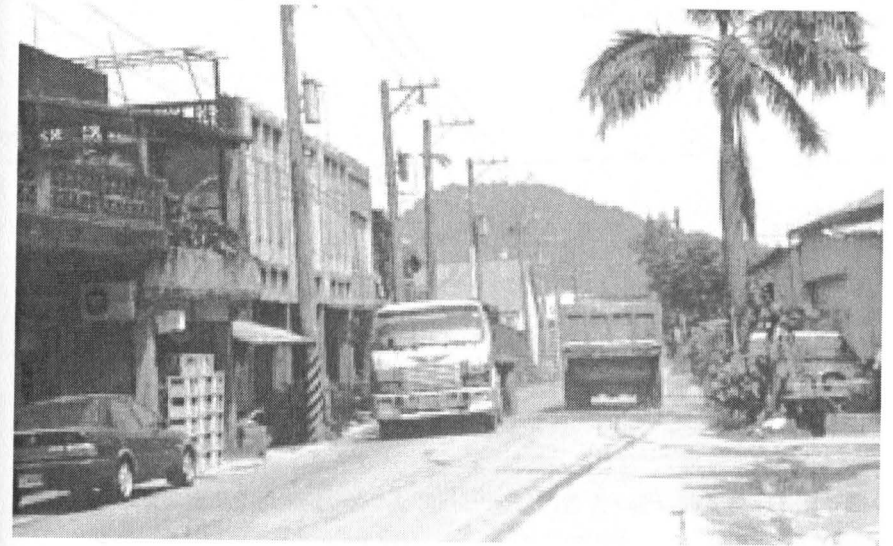


Fig. 8. Baimi, a Declined Mining Village



Fig. 9. Muji Painting, Baimi



Fig. 10. The Muji Shopping Mall, Baimi

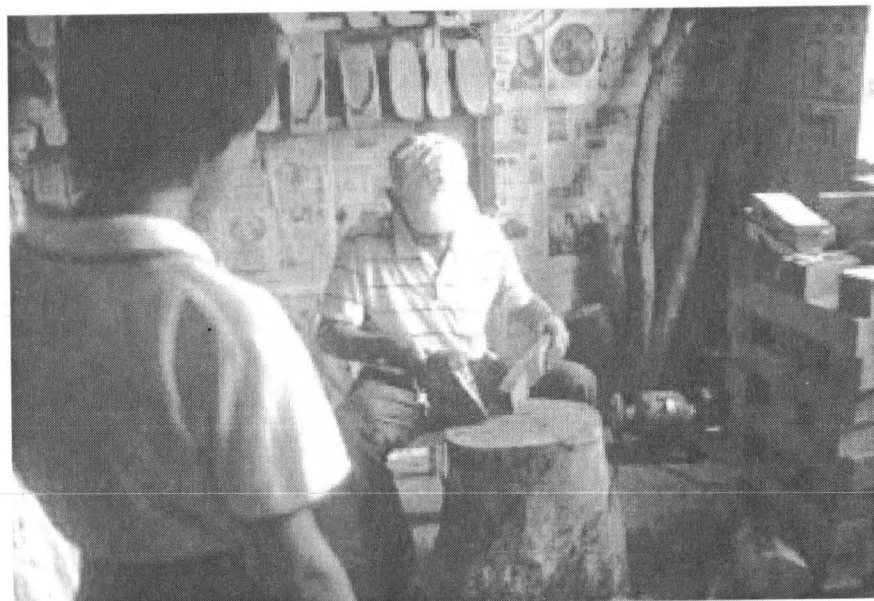


Fig. 11. Demonstration of Muji Production

## CHAPTER 6

# ENACTMENT OF A NATIONSCAPE: TRAVELLING THE LOCAL DIFFERENCES

IN THE PRECEDING CHAPTER WE HAVE EXAMINED HOW A COMMUNITY HERITAGE WAS invented in Baimi to satisfy the public longing for a consumable past. Baimi's story is far from an isolated case. In Taiwan, just like other modern post-industrial societies, history has become a profitable component of local economies. As old lifestyles disappear through the processes of industrialization and urbanization, the modern Taiwanese struggle to seek sites beyond their urban dwellings to prompt memories of childhood. Elaborating on the notion that modern tourists look at other places to find their own authenticity, Caren Kaplan writes: "When the past is displaced, often to another location, the modern subject must travel to it, as it were. History becomes something to be established and managed through tours, exhibitions, and representational practices."<sup>1</sup> By the same token, in the late 1990s many places were established to supply histories within Taiwan. While Kaplan's discussion was mainly focused on international traveling (which she too quickly equated to Euro-American activity), Taiwan's historic places were built to cater to domestic tourists, a newly emerging phenomenon which would affirm the spatio-temporal dimension of the nation.

According to Marshall Johnson, "The reality of national territory depends on the construction of a unified time-space stream of history."<sup>2</sup> Within a developing national territory places are codified as materialized pasts, and tourists travel to them to celebrate history. Coinciding with the emergence of Taiwanese nationalism, a new system of place-making is being established through a peculiar operation of historical tourism, seeking to compete against, and eventually subvert the previous iconography—the heritage system of the KMT regime. This particular form of tourism, often termed *wenshi daolan*, or cultural-historical tourism, is the focus of this chapter.

Urieli defines postmodern tourism as "the rise of small and specialized travel agencies, [and] the growing attraction of nostalgia and 'heritage tourism.'"<sup>3</sup> Taiwan's flourishing cultural-historical tourism can be seen as part of this phenomenon, considering its similar exploitation of cultural diversity, nostalgic practice and historic heritage. Munt argues that there exists a connection between the rise of the new middle class and cultural tourism, in particular the heritage consumption in European cities. He terms this breed of tourism as "Other tourism", combining "different, often intellectual, spheres of activity."<sup>4</sup> Lowenthal also points out that heritage has become "a self-conscious creed" that prevails in contemporary public discourse.<sup>5</sup> In a similar vein, Taiwan's contemporary cultural/historical tourism surely serves the postmodern desire for pursuing "difference," either in spatial or temporal sense, through marketing, visualizing and exoticizing a remote history. This history, whose publication is a mere decade old, is heavily nationalistic in sentiment as "Taiwan" is the totality of its reference system. Therefore we may argue that Taiwan's cultural/historical tourism embodies an uneasy combination of postmodernism and nationalism: postmodern nostalgia is directed by an emergent narrative of the national past.<sup>6</sup>

#### TOURISM IN HISTORY

While mass tourism reflects society in industrialist states, the roots of contemporary sightseeing behavior lie in the past.<sup>7</sup> Travelogue has long been an important genre in "premodern" Chinese literature. During the late Qing period, literati visited Taiwan for business, mining, or adventure; many crafted travelogues recounting their experiences. The most extensive investigation of Taiwan's scenery and folk life, however, did not occur until the Japanese period. Japanese colonial officials, intellectuals, and writers published a wide variety of guidebooks on Taiwan. They also initiated the rudimentary form of cultural-historical tours. For example, *Minzoku Taiwan*, the first folklore study journal published in Taiwan, hosted "folklore collection tours (minsu caifang)" in which the participants, both Taiwanese and Japanese, toured famous Taiwanese edifices or historic districts and wrote journal reports afterwards. This tradition was then adopted by the postwar journal, *Taiwan Fengwu* (Taiwanese Customs and Artifacts), and some popular heritage scholars. Lin Hengdao for example crafted several national heritage tours such as the Lin Garden in Taipei and the Gu Residential Mansion in Lukang during the 1970s. Between the late 1970s and early 1980s, *Baodao wenxue* (in-depth report literature) dominated the literature section of Taiwan's major newspapers. Various books were written in this thread about Taiwan's folk cultures; various discoveries were made and articulated during that period. It was the first time that the Taiwanese folk life was associated with the foundation of a national consciousness in public discourse. Books such as "*Xunzhao Xiangtu Taiwan* (Searching for Native Taiwan)" and

"*Xunzhao Lao Taiwan* (Searching for Old Taiwan)" were written by writers earnestly seeking the basis for national identity to defy the overwhelming power of westernization through traveling to countryside or small towns. This movement, however, eventually crumbled as disagreement over how to define "the nation" put the travel writers in two bitterly opposing camps.

Despite its long existence, cultural/historical tourism had been an elite activity until the 1990s. Accompanying the popularization of cultural tourism was the transformation of intellectual assessment of the pedagogical value of tourism. Scholars no longer regarded tourism as solely an entertainment process; rather, they argued that its essence stood as a testimonial to the relative level of national enlightenment and societal morality. Many intellectuals wrote commentaries on Taiwan's tourism expounding upon its flaws. They often compared it with "advanced countries" and lamented on the vulgarity of Taiwanese tourists. Du Zhengsheng for example wrote in his book *Taiwan Xin, Taiwan Hun* (*Taiwanese heart, Taiwanese spirit*), "tourism reflected the collective personality and the degree of civilization of a nation."<sup>8</sup> Local historians and cultural workers also despised the crude quality of Taiwan's domestic tourism, which they argued played a key role in their homeland's corruption. Local historian Zhang Jianlong of Tanshui wrote in an appendix to his article, "The Lost Landscape of Kuan Yin Mountain," that outrageous leisure activities brought "urban rash and superficiality" to tourist sites and destroyed Mother Nature. He exclaimed, "If everyone viewed their home as a travel destination and tourist attraction, and cherished every corner of their home, our homeland would no longer be damaged and trampled on by outsiders. Furthermore, we would be able to cooperate on building a beautiful homeland while enjoying the pleasure of travel every day. . . . There would be little need for our citizens to go abroad to find the pleasures of travel."<sup>9</sup> Outside the intellectual circle, the mass media also began to market alternative travel. For example, the "Baodao (Treasure Island)" section of *China Times* introduced one "less known" region of Taiwan each week; most of the sites were small towns, aboriginal tribes, recently "discovered" hiking trails or natural scenic spots. Under their influence, a gradual transformation of mass tourism started to take place in the 1990s. The distinction between "travelers" and "tourists" became blurred; reflective and educational tours were no longer exclusively elite activities.

The transition of the public perception of tourism was reflected in language. Instead of *guanguang*, the literal translation for tourism, this progressive tourism was touted as *daolan* (guided walk), *shendu luyou* (in-depth trip), or *tianye* (fieldwork). It was as if the term *guanguang* carried with it connotations of an irresponsible attitude, an indifferent glimpse of the other place, as well as stupidity and ignorance toward the things that *ought to be seen*.<sup>10</sup> *Guanguangke* (conventional tourists) was equated to those who polluted the land, corrupted the natives, contributed to traffic jams, and were

completely unaware of the historic or structural issues that their travel destinations faced in everyday life. By contrast, participants of daolan, often called *xueyuan* (learners), were supposedly intellectual people, capable or willing to discern the "truth" blurred by various modern intrusions. The desire for learning and uncovering the "truth" of a place grew among the populace; travel ceased to be the exclusive domain of tourist bureaus, but was incorporated into county cultural offices in the 1990s.

"The In-depth Tour Guide of Taiwan" (*Taiwan Shendu Luyou Shouce*) was the first widely circulated series of guide books of this trend. Published in 1990, the series contained six pocket-size guidebooks featuring the local histories and natural landscapes of old towns and urban historic districts. Prompted by its commercial success and positive reception in the book market, many towns and districts began to print their own tour maps and pamphlets, featuring selected sites to represent their local histories. Parallel to Rutheiser's analysis of Atlanta's urban tourist information center, these highly selective representations are thought to "convey something of the 'essence' of the place, the unique particularity sedimented over time in this space."<sup>11</sup>

This chapter examines the metamorphosis of cultural-historical tourism in Taiwan. Three different tourist attractions—Tanshui, Dadaocheng, and Ilan—are investigated. Each uses history to market itself, yet each has its own style of presenting and profiting from the past. Marshall Johnson argues, "Nationalism's territorial imperative in every nation-state is the institutional production of its pastness."<sup>12</sup> In Taiwan however, the rapid transition from one national imaginary to another, from being a Chinese province to a self-sufficient nation-state, often resulted in multiple interpretations of "pastness" for a given locale. Perhaps the most contentious question is how to interpret the presence of "foreignness" in the past since the island of Taiwan has been claimed by many different nationalities, including China. Therefore in the following case studies, contrasting methods for resolving conflicting national identities and incorporating alterity into a linear national narrative will be examined.

Tanshui's historical walk was among the earliest in-depth township tours promoted by citizen groups in Taiwan. The tour led visitors to "walk through" the architectural remains of different historical periods. Dadaocheng, one of the oldest districts of Taipei City, was the most prosperous commercial street of Taipei during the Japanese period. The major temple of this area, *Xiahai Chenghuang* (Xiahai City God Temple), sponsored historic tours led by *Gufeng*, an important folklore association. Except for a few temples, the history featured in the Dadaocheng tour dated to the 1920s and 30s, the time when a notion of "Taiwanese culture" first emerged in intellectual circles. Curiously, the tour of Dadaocheng was mainly a tour of the vanished since most of the sites were demolished or radically renovated. The tour thus mainly relied on narratives and imaginations, leading the

tourists through a narrated history on an itinerary of traces.

Different from these two cases that profited from composed historical narratives, Ilan's tour was founded on the creation of a "future past."<sup>13</sup> Being one of the latest Han settlements in Taiwan, Ilan did not have as many officially designated historic sites as Tanshui and Dadaocheng. Instead, tourist sites were *consciously* designed and built to initiate a future-oriented, place-making process. These edifices, parks, and designated conservation areas were inspired by eclectic elements taken from local histories. They were supposed to compose a heritage for the county that was seen as a microcosm of the nation within a foreseeable future.

#### TANSHUI: NATIONAL HISTORIC TOWN—THE FOREIGN IS OUR PAST<sup>14</sup>

The Tanshui historical tour was led by the oldest local historical society in town, the Hobei Local Cultural and Historical Society. It included two different routes, each representing a different period of the town's history. The "Old Street Session" covered the heritage from Chinese settlements, whereas the "Western Building Session" featured the missionary district built by Canadian Presbyterian missionaries on the hills. Most visitors found the missionary district more desirable since its architecture was well maintained by the church, and its landscape still embodied the original form to some extent.

During the tours, the guides, all volunteers, presented a wide variety of *lieux de memoire*, sites of memory.<sup>15</sup> Each was traced a different origin, or inhabitant of the island, and a different time period in the *national history*. There is always excess, nonetheless. Touring the remains left by different "intruders" reminded people that the place and the history being consumed were not solely their own. It is this fundamental split-in-self which makes *the* Taiwanese history and identity so troubling. At the same time, the troubled identity can only be resolved in the name of the Local: Under the claim of the local, all can be merged, absorbed by *our land*.

#### THE MISSIONARY DISTRICT: NOTES FROM AN ACTUAL TOUR

"Let's wait here for a minute." Mr. Ji said after a tour group stepped up on the overpass above a busy road. He was leading a historical tour, entitled "A Beginner's Taste of Tanshui Culture," for a college student group. The tour, one of the many regular tours that Mr. Ji and his local history enthusiasts led every weekend, began at the Tanshui Cultural Center located by the entrance of the overpass. Our destination for the day was the hill across the overpass, a historic district built by British merchants and Canadian Presbyterian missionaries during the turn of the century.

The overpass, as Mr. Ji explained, was one of the best viewpoints in town.

From there we got a wide view of the town's landscape, albeit obstructed by high-rises and power lines. The road below, which was constructed during the late 1970s to accommodate the increased traffic flow of urban visitors, destroyed the original serenity of the hillside. Ironically one may note its name: "New Life Street (Xinsheng Jie)."

The building of New Life Street marked the termination of the isolation of the missionary district. The hillside, centered on what was once the British Consulate and overseeing the sunset view of the mouth of the Tanshui River, was claimed by the Europeans after the Opium War. A stone tablet marking the boundary between Chinese and European quarters was erected during 1885 at the base of the hill. The area was then taken over by the Japanese during 1895 after China's defeat in the Sino-Japanese War and returned to the Republic of China government in 1945. Throughout this political turbulence however, most of the constructions tied to the Canadian missionary, George Mackay, remained undisturbed; they were protected by the control and efficient management of the Presbyterian Church. The stone tablet had long since lost its original function, its physical appearance barely visible amid the weeds. The hillside preserved its secluded ambience until the late 1970s when New Life Street, which cut through the foothill, transformed it from a pedestrian-only area in the wake of Taiwan's booming economy.

Despite the road construction, the hillside, saturated with colonial traces, still appealed to young visitors because of its peculiarity. Ji led the students on a walk through a brick-paved path, which lay behind the main road and buried under untrimmed trees and vines. He informed the visitors that they were walking on exactly the same route that Mackay traveled more than a century ago, in a jungle of hostility and insults from the natives for whom his was the first foreign face they had ever observed. The trail led to the hilltop, where there was a deserted yard facing the river. Only some rusted wires surrounding the yard were the remnants suggestive of previous settlement. Ji sorted through the weeds and pointed to three piles of dark stones, explaining that these were once the burners in the kitchen of the residential house for the former British commission officers. The ghostly presence of colonial memory extended to the abandoned building across the yard. Built in the last century by the British Customs, the house was nicknamed by the locals as the "Little White House (Xiao Baigong);" the name indicating its exotic image, distinguished by its arcade, off-white stonewalls, original black saddleback roof, and arched windows. The ownership of the house had been transferred along with changes in political rulers. The Ministry Of Finance (MOF), its latest owner, once planned to demolish the house and build an eighteen-story residential condominium, but the township grassroots leaders protested. After two years of negotiation, the MOF agreed to preserve the house, although unwillingly and without any maintenance provision. The dilapidated mansion subsequently became a local legend for its preservation

was the fruit of local community ownership. After a century of foreign and national ownership, the local Tanshui community finally regained some measure of control over the building.<sup>16</sup>

For the young visitors, an exciting facet of the tour was gaining access to otherwise forbidden sites, such as the campus of Tamkang High School and Tamsui Oxford College. Both were established by the Canadian Presbyterian missionaries during the turn of the century. Both campuses, full of missionary-era architecture, have long been popular filming locations for movies, TV shows, and commercials.<sup>17</sup> Their popularity prompted the schools to renounce tourist access; so that entrance permission was granted only to those who had special connections to the school board. Hobei, claiming the educational value of its historic tours, was one of the few local groups allowed to freely enter the campuses.

Indeed, as many participants of the historical tour would later comment, the most rewarding experience throughout the whole tour was the segment within the secluded walls of Tamkang High School. Most tour participants had been to the hillside previously and denied access to the campus site; they could only wander outside the walls, peering through fences at the partially obstructed view of the brick buildings. Thus permission to enter the hitherto mysterious campuses provided tour participants with a feeling of pride in being distinguished from ordinary tourists.

One female university student said, "I was stunned by the beauty of Tamkang. It was an unnamable beauty; completely different from any place I had ever seen in the Taipei area."

Ji asked the visitors to pay special attention to the trivia differentiating the traces of *waiguo ren* (foreigners/foreign residency) from *women* (us): The foreigners' living habits are different. They put blinds on the windows; they built fireplaces; they needed airy basements and long porches to cool down during the hot summers, as they were not physically built for a tropical climate. Again, the ghostly presence of "the Foreigner" emerged from Ji's vivid and detailed narration.

The physical setting of the missionary houses is a metaphor of the ways in which Taiwanese deal with their colonial past. The colonial past appears as a remote period that can merely be peered into, fixed in a self-circumscribed region, constantly reminding the Taiwanese that "we" are not "them." "They" represent a romantic imaginary; something that "we" lack. Yet we are not threatened by them. Quite the contrary, it is better that they remain behind the high walls, sustaining a timeless aestheticism, and that access to them is only granted to distinctive groups at special moments. "[Identity] is that which is narrated in one's own self," Stuart Hall wrote. This self, however, is always a split entity—"splitting between that which one is, and that which is the other . . . the Other that one can only know from the place from which one stands."<sup>18</sup>

### MASS RAPID TRANSIT: MODERN TIME, GLOBAL SPACE

One indispensable dimension of the tour to Tanshui was the Mass Rapid Transit (MRT). Although Tanshui had been a tourist attraction since the Japanese occupation, the idea of "historical walk" was not publicized until the late 1980s, and only became overwhelmingly popular after the MRT's opening in 1998. Stepping out of the MRT Tanshui Station, one witnessed a sharp contrast between two different worlds. Inside the MRT station and throughout the train ride on the most significant and expensive public construction project of the island in the 1990s, a peculiar sense of modern place, or non-place, prevailed.<sup>19</sup> As a collaborative outcome by the Taipei City Government and transnational corporations, the transit delivered a polished global experience through automatic gates, multi-lingual broadcasting of station names, and exceptional tidiness of its public restrooms. Yet, the MRT was also an emblem of national pride; a symbol of democracy and modernization of the Taiwanese nation. Its scandalous fame during the 1980s, when the budget of the project kept expanding yet the finish date seemed infinitely deferred, was profoundly redeemed by the first popularly-elected Mayor of Taipei, Chen Shui-bian.<sup>20</sup>

The opening of the MRT Tanshui line was such a significant political event that the Taipei City Hall waived the ticket fare for the first three days, in order to showcase this extravagant public investment. During those three days, an estimated 400,000 people took the train and visited its final stop in Tanshui. In the months that followed, "taking the MRT to Tanshui" became the most popular weekend getaway for residents of Taipei. It is a combination of two, or even more divergent experiences: a combination of the modern—the consummating outcome of Taiwan's economic progress—and the past—the historic ruins which have survived the drastic suburban sprawl of the "old town." Judging from the sudden increase in the number of requests that Hobei received for its historic tours, it is clear that this combination is most appealing in a touristic sense.

Harrell pointed out that the rapid modernization of Taiwan, including increased family income and convenient transportation, has restructured the citizenry's conception of time and space, as shown clearly in the increased frequency of leisure activity and the changing form of domestic tourism.<sup>21</sup> Weekend trips were no longer a luxury nor a prestigious activity. Rather, they became a mundane part of ordinary family life. The demands for recreational places increased significantly when the Ministry of the Interior announced a new policy in 1997 to slash the workweek from five and a half days to five days thereby increasing the weekend to two full days. Tanshui, being the nearest historic town to Taipei City, therefore became one of the most popular weekend destinations for the Taipei crowd.

Fowler in his book "The Past in Contemporary Society" describes most heritage package tours as combinations of piecemeal history, a feeling of

pastness, and handy commodities such as crafts and photos.<sup>22</sup> In Britain heritage trips play an important role in family "days-out" activities. The eclecticism of heritage daytrips provides a spectrum of experience accessible to families with children. In a similar vein, Tanshui, with the "piecemeal history" attached to its name, provided visitors with a variety of recreational experiences. A characteristic itinerary for a Tanshui trip included taking the MRT from Taipei station, walking the "Old Street," window shopping at antique and souvenir stores, nibbling on "local cuisine" bought from the ubiquitous street vendors, a historical tour of the missionary district, and ending with a sunset watch on the river front.

In her article "Nationscape," Anagnost interpreted the Splendid China theme park in Shenzhen as a compressed representation of China's glorious past "contained" within an urban space representing the nation's route to modernization. She suggested, "this layering of representations express the ambivalent temporality of the nation-state as being always caught 'between' its simultaneous desire for being deeply historical and yet undeniably modern."<sup>23</sup> In a similar fashion, a historical tour in Tanshui captures the un-unified temporality of a national narrative. I do not suggest that Tanshui is another theme park. Tanshui is indeed different from Splendid China in the sense that most of its historical sites were not built for entertainment services, but were ruins left over time. It takes a *tour*, the bodily movement through various physical sites, to complete the narrative. Unlike a theme park, which has a well-defined boundary to its contrived representation, a historical tour across Tanshui is unavoidably permeated with "modern intrusions"—speeding scooters, ongoing construction, high rises, noises, waste, etc. Interestingly, those modern intrusions do not seem to weaken the authenticity of the sparse heritage sites. Rather, they only elevate the value of the historic ruins, for which they have been salvaged from the powerful modern destruction. They also further the impression that the old temples and historic architecture are "havens" in the midst of chaotic modern surroundings. Therefore the island's past has become a resort for the stressed-out urban visitors.

The past, however, does not just sit there, waiting to be taken by the dislocated travelers for refuge. "There is a past to be learned about," as Stuart Hall said, "but the past is now seen, and has to be grasped as a history. . . . It is narrated. . . . It is grasped through desire."<sup>24</sup> Tourists do not "discover" the historic sites. Most of them need guidance identifying, and later, interpreting historic sites. Through the route narrated by local-history workers, dispersed sites are connected as *a* history, as sites of memory, as the physical inscriptions of the "three hundred years of Taiwanese history."<sup>25</sup> Ironically, the sites best preserved were built by the "bearded foreigner,"<sup>26</sup> managed by foreign institutions, and kept separate from native culture. Thus, the tour visualizes Taiwan's coloniality, the negative basis from which a Taiwanese identity is to form.



## DADAOCHENG: VANISHED TIME, NARRATED MEMORIES

Within the cultural-historical tourism phenomenon, the past does not even have to "be there," in its physical form. Sometimes a sense of "pastness" is created from the purely imaginary with no concrete manifestation. Or, what we are supposed to "see" is the negativity of what's actually "out there." De Certeau writes: "It is striking here that the places people live in are like the presence of diverse absences. What can be seen designates what is no longer there: 'you see, here there used to be . . . ' but it can no longer be seen. Demonstratives indicate the invisible identities of the visible: it is the very definition of a place, in fact, that it is composed by these series of displacements and effects among the fragmented."<sup>27</sup> The authenticity of such locations—the belief that "something happened before"—is conveyed through the narration of the tour guide, guidebook, or display caption. Especially in Taiwan as reckless development has pushed a lot of old buildings into oblivion, a historical tour often has to include vanished sites to complete its historical narrative.

Using Hong Kong as example, Ackbar Abbas describes that "rapidly changing cities . . . produce the unfamiliar in the familiar; i.e., the unfamiliar which is half-seen or seen subliminally behind the seen/scene of the familiar."<sup>28</sup> The subliminal, furthermore, "is experienced . . . in part *allegorically*, in terms of a spatial-temporal delay that prevents sign and meaning from coinciding. . . . In allegory, signs . . . become provocative, provoking the making of narratives, including narratives of identity."

At first glance, Dadaocheng, an old neighborhood of Taipei, did not feel "old" at all. It included an area of the commercial zones northwest of the Taipei Railway Station. The area appeared little different from any other city neighborhood of Taipei composed of three-to-five story townhouses lined up along the streets; most of the arcades, originally designed to be sheltered walkways, were turned into parking lots for motor scooters or extended display space for retail stores. The sidewalks were clogged with scooters, passengers and vendors; the roads were usually jammed by dense flow of vehicles and double or even triple lines of parking. Because most streets were repeatedly widened and repaved throughout the postwar years to accommodate the increasing traffic load, the townhouses, often renovated at a hasty pace, had acquired faceless facades.

Historically, however, Dadaocheng was a crucial location for several historical events since the nineteenth century. It was the second oldest settlement of Han Chinese in the Taipei basin. During the late Qing period, when Liu Ming-chuan conducted his first modernization project in Taiwan, Dadaocheng was designated as the primary trade port of Taipei; thereafter its economic status began to supercede Mengjia, the earliest Han settlement. The opening of the trade port brought in foreign capital and cultural influences. Taiwan's first European expatriate residential area was here, so too was

the first Western-style school (*Xixuetang*), telegraph technology school and train station.

During the Japanese period Dadaocheng became the economic and cultural center for the Taiwanese elite. While the inner city as the political center, was predominated by Japanese residents, most Taiwanese elites preferred to reside and socialize in Dadaocheng, the district outside the North Gate of Taipei City. Taiwan Cultural Association, the prominent native organization advocating cultural enlightenment and civil rights for Taiwanese people, was based in Dadaocheng, so too were several other progressive groups. Ikeda, a devoted colonial folklorist active during the prewar period, once said, "walking out the North Gate, I entered Dadaocheng. This area is different from the inner city that have a lot of Japanese-owned shops; thus the trip gave me the delight of *border crossing* (*yuejing*)."<sup>29</sup> Ikeda's description illustrated that during the late 1930s Dadaocheng was already recognized as a Taiwanese neighborhood in which a Taiwanese identity was being formed in contrast to the Japanese rulers.

For contemporary Taiwan, the most significant event in Dadaocheng occurred on Feb 27, 1947. It began with a female peddler, who was harassed by policemen for selling contraband cigarettes. Fueled by widespread resentment against the Nationalist government, the incident soon became a major uprising. "The 2-28 Uprising," a landmark in Taiwan's national history, founded the politics of nativist resistance against the KMT. This part of Dadaocheng history had been silenced until the late 1980s; its revelation coincided with the popularization of native ethnology in Taiwan.

On a rainy Sunday in December 1999, I noticed three women university students wandering on the Dadaocheng streets with a stack of print-outs. They stopped in front of the sign of "Bolilu (Bolero)," read their print-outs dutifully, and discussed with each other the history of an otherwise ordinary-looking restaurant. That restaurant was one of the earliest western-style restaurants in Taipei and the most popular meeting place for the intellectuals and upper-class Taiwanese during the Japanese period. I asked them whether they were doing a "self-guided" tour of Dadaocheng, and where they had acquired their printed information. Stunned by my naïve questions, they told me that the information could be easily retrieved from the internet, by typing "dadaocheng" into a search engine. In a similar fashion, a description of each designated "historic place" would be obtainable.

There were in fact a couple of web sites dedicated to the historical tourism of Dadaocheng. The site those college students referred to was maintained by a local historical society. Most information posted there was drawn from Zhuang Yongming's book *Dadaocheng Xiaoyao You: Taipei Wenhua Yaolandi Caifeng* (A joyful tour in Dadaocheng : scenes of the cradle for Taipei's culture) which was the most widely circulated book concerning the Dadaocheng tour. The other web site, designed by Taipei's Department of

Transportation divided the city into different neighborhoods. Thus many tours were devised, each boasting a distinctive focus. At the administrative level, Dadaocheng is governed by Datong District, and is classified as one of two certifiably "old" districts.

While both served touristic purposes, the two web sites embodied different foci. The official site detailed the historic remains, most of which were temples and residential houses. The one managed by the historical society highlighted various temporal episodes, especially the intellectual and commercial history of Dadaocheng during the Japanese period—the climax of Dadaocheng's prosperity. A great number of the places—such as trading company buildings and meeting places for colonial period intellectuals—featured on the historical society web page no longer existed in any recognizable form. Until very recently in postwar Taiwan, the colonial past was not credited as "history." Thus historic preservation was scarcely ever a consideration.

My interest in Dadaocheng began with a tour accompanied by members of Hobei. As stated in Chapter three, the group members had an earnest interest in local history and frequently participated in activities hosted by similar groups outside of Tanshui. At a regular meeting in November 1997, the members decided to take a tour in Dadaocheng; their interests in the neighborhood mainly emerged out of the geographical proximity between Tanshui and Dadaocheng. Both places are located along the Tanshui River and shared a close trading relationship during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The Dadaocheng tour was led by a group of folklorists on the first and third Sundays of every month since July 1997. Sponsored by *Xiahai Chenghuang* (City god) Temple, Dadaocheng's most prominent temple, the tour was open to the public without an admission fee. I took the tour on December 21, 1997. Our tour guide of the day, Ms. Chang Liwen, was the executive director of the Taipei Folklore Association. The attendants were mostly young (in their twenties and thirties) yet experienced with all sorts of historical tours. In addition to the Hobei members, I recognized a couple whom I had met in various historical tours within the Taipei area. We gathered in the courtyard of *Cisheng Gong*, Dadaocheng's Mazu Temple. Some volunteers gave us name tags, caps, and the pocket book *Dadaocheng Xiaoyao You*, which, as it later became clear, was the written source for the route and narration of our guided tour.

During the tour we were led to various sites surviving only in memory. Aside from a few temples and historic houses, most featured sites were either demolished or modified from their original form. Chang first directed us to an empty land parcel at the back of the Mazu Temple. She informed us that the land had once hosted a hospital directed by the first Taiwanese medical doctor Du Congming during the Japanese period. In response to Taiwanese intellectuals who advocated an anti-opium campaign during the 1930s, the

Japanese government converted the hospital into a drug rehabilitation institute. After the war, this building was purchased by the First Bank, then rented to the "Planning Committee for Restoring the Mainland (guangfu dalu sheji weiyuanhui)" which was affiliated with the Executive Yuan. The Committee was dismissed during the early 1990s; the Taipei City government had considered designating the house as a historic heritage site, but the First Bank, abruptly tore it down for fear that the heritage designation would bring strict prohibition on any future profitable development of the land parcel. Chang lamented, "this place used to be a beautiful red-brick house, with a lot of historical memories. Yet now nothing exists. From a Japanese medical institution to the now laughable Planning Committee for Restoring Mainland China, and finally to an empty lot full of weeds—such is the common fate of Taiwan's historic preservation!"

Lamentation for the disappearance of material traces dominated our Dadaocheng tour. We were led to many vanished sites: a modern high rise built on the location of a famous brothel, a back alley that used to be the busiest street for tea trading, an ordinary-looking street corner where the 2–28 uprising was triggered, the campus of the earliest Japanese-era public school that had been entirely renovated, and a row of plain townhouses whose past incarnation had been a meeting place for left-wing Taiwanese intellectuals. Sentences starting with "here there used to be..." or "event X happened here before" filled Chang's narration. As de Certeau pointed out, the presence of the modern cityscape chiefly reminds us what no longer exists at the moment. History was available in a purely phantasmatic form, mediated by the voiced representation of our tour guide and embodied in our walking.

De Certeau argues, "[Space] is discursively mapped and corporeally practiced."<sup>30</sup> The authenticity of Dadaocheng was established by Chang's story-telling and "witnessed" by our "being there." Yet this authenticity could not be fully confirmed without material traces. Fragmented ruins scattered amid the ghostly presence of local histories: a decrepit mansion with Baroque ornamentation was once the residence of Dadaocheng's wealthiest tea businessman; the "Bolero" restaurant, the first "western" restaurant of Taipei, still carried its original sign; the bamboo-shaped pipelines outside of a remodeled street house recalled its original owner—a prominent colonial-era folksong composer. Those remnants, although fragmentary, gave weight to the voiced history of our tour.

Yet, not every absence is lamentable. What is counted as "forgotten" or "vanished" is delineated with the "should-be remembered" imposed by the narration of local historians.<sup>31</sup> Our guided tour had two basic celebratory themes: prominent Taiwanese of the colonial era and foreign influences brought in during the early twentieth century. The first included those whom had fought against Japanese rule, those who had vowed to enlighten the

Taiwanese people in the 1930s to 1940s, and those who had composed folk music. The second centered on the wealthy businessmen who profited from trade with foreign countries at the beginning of the twentieth century. Foreign elements, such as architectural styles, western-style restaurants and entertainment, and the Presbyterian Church, became parts of Taiwanese history. A darker strand of the narrative, on the contrary, concerned the oppressive KMT central government. In contrast to the celebratory tone regarding Japanese and Western elements, the general influence of the KMT was seen as an intrusion to this specific locale. Therefore Japanese-period architecture was "heritage," whereas the "Committee of Restoring Mainland China" was just a joke, a stigma for a period to be omitted.

The discomfort with the historical transformation associated with the KMT regime was revealed in Chang's narrative regarding the post-war changes of street names. Chang joked when she led us to Liangzhou Street "as if we were in Northwestern China," since the street was named after a northwestern Chinese city. Guide Street, another China place name from Qinghai Province, also named by the KMT government, was called "gangding" in the Japanese period; the Japanese name referred to its proximity to the old harbor by Tanshui River. "This street used to be the wealthiest neighborhood where most of the tea companies were concentrated. Also, a lot of foreigners, mostly British, resided here." Yet now "the British companies are gone. The original location of *gangding wenhua jiangzuo* (Gangding Cultural Series), the center for anti-Japanese intellectual activities, has vanished without leaving any trace. This spot has thus become the 'invisible historic heritage' for Taiwan's anti-colonial history."<sup>32</sup>

## ILAN: HISTORY IS IN OUR FUTURE

For a place without much displayable past, history, as written archives, can still be dragged out, rearranged, and exploited in a direction oriented to the future. I have described in chapter four that Ilan's place-making movement follows a future-oriented rhetoric. Its county tourism, furthermore, markets a curious combination of homeland and utopia. In its temporal construction, historical narration does not step backward but always relates to the future—the imaginary future to which the county and the nation ought to be led.

As I have described, Ilan County, suffering from depopulation, the lack of profitable industry, and an out-migration of younger people in search of jobs, struggled to find a way to compensate for its declining agriculture and industrial sectors. Tourism thus emerged as an alternative source of economic revenue. As in other counties in Eastern Taiwan, the underdeveloped and depopulated Ilan came to be viewed as a natural park where urban tourists could experience a natural beauty otherwise lacking in their daily lives. Moreover, a well-managed tourism could help to establish Ilan's cultural capital by showcasing its endeavors of cultural construction, the county

claimed to be "the county for culture" in Taiwan. As far as heritage tourism goes, however, Ilan is short of nationally recognized heritage sites since it is one of the last areas in Taiwan to be colonized by Han settlers. The first recorded Han settlers arrived in Ilan in 1796, compared to the 1640s for Tanshui. Furthermore, Ilan has always been peripheral to the political or economic centers in Taiwan and thus it possesses few architectural treasures today. In fact, Ilan has only one nationally designated heritage site and was never considered a center of the historical or cultural landscape of Taiwan until the mid 1990s. Once I asked a member of Hobei, an enthusiastic college graduate dedicated to local history research, why he did not take a job offer with a resourceful foundation in Ilan. He responded, "Ilan has no heritage (guji)."

The lack of national heritage in Ilan County was, however, often overlooked by the public after the mid-1990s. During the climax of its place-making process Ilan county government built various landmarks, which soon turned into tourist attractions, to celebrate the multicultural histories of the county. These constructions were not built by the conventional preservationist methods of restoring historic buildings. Rather, they exhibit an eclectic flavor in combining architectural elements taken from different historical periods and cultural groups linked to Ilan's territory; they also embody progressive ideas such as environmentalism and conservationism. When questioned about the "authenticity" of these projects, county officials explained that the buildings were built to be a heritage for the future generation. They believed that Ilan's exceptional regional aestheticism would pioneer the architectural fashion of the nation. Borrowing from Ivy's account of Tono City in Japan, one could say that Ilan presents itself as a combination of utopia and homeland for all the Taiwanese, from "a dystopia to a utopia, from the vanishing marginal into the centrally" Taiwanese.<sup>33</sup>

## TOUR OF ILAN

The making of landmark architecture enabled the county government and cultural workers to promote a new brand of tourism, which wove together rusticity, colorful vernacular cultures, and forward-looking images of the county to attract progressive tourists. When I worked with the county cultural office during early 1998, and then a local community association for the following two months, my colleagues had to entertain visitors (i.e., officials from other counties, college students, non-profit organizations, or just inquisitive tourists) every week. Similar to Tanshui and Dadaocheng, the Ilan visitors did not view themselves as tourists. Rather, they came with a focused purpose—to learn about Ilan, its peculiar history, its colorful communities, and its foresight in regional planning.

Various Ilan sites congealed into a standardized ensemble of attractions by the end of Yu Hsi-kun's second term. A map depicting "Ilan's new

cultural landscape," which includes all the "New Architecture" built during the terms of the two former magistrates—Chen Dingnan and Yu Hsyi-Kun—was drawn by the county cultural office to ensure that visitors did not miss any of the designated tour sites. Some seasonal festivals in local communities were also labeled on the map. Following every site on the map would take more than a day; thus the government also promoted a "living in a residential house" project to encourage visitors to stay with Ilan locals, and to increase local income with even more tourist money.

Ilan's touring package neatly fits Taiwan's emergent heritage tourism. Parallel to what Dean MacCannell observed in his classic work *The Tourist*, "being a tourist" is considered morally reproachable among middle class people in contemporary Taiwan. Yet, as MacCannell poignantly argued, "The touristic shame is not based on being a tourist but on not being tourist enough, on a failure to see everything the way it 'ought' to be seen."<sup>34</sup> An anxiety over the fragmentation of modernity, and the desires for a deep involvement with the imagined totality of society and culture, are the basic motivations for modern tourists. In this context, the tightly defined tours that Ilan government promoted subdued the modern tourists' anxiety since it directed tourists to what they "ought to see."

The travel to Ilan entails a composition of different experience. Imagine yourself driving on the Taipei-Ilan mountain highway (*Bei-yi Gonglu*), surrounded by a dense forest on both sides. After about one hour of a drive uphill on the mostly winding mountain road one arrives at the mountain top, where some vendors have built a row of tin-roofed shacks to sell local specialties and refreshments. You pass over the stores, head downhill, and suddenly the turquoise ocean and the turtle-shape island appear in front of you, demanding your attention. If the picturesque landscape, which appears in numerous postcards and guidebooks, has not yet called your attention that you are entering Ilan's territory, then the miniature of Ilan's "Eight Scenes (*bajing*)" put out by the Ilan Tourist Bureau at every turn of the downhill probably would. Each of the concrete-made miniatures has an illustration on the display board in front of them, informing the prospective visitor what he/she shall anticipate in the county. Then at the exit of the highway one arrives at Jiaoxi, a town originally famous for its hot spring hotels and "tezhong yingye" (special business, a.k.a. sex industry). Now it has become a showcase for "recreational agriculture." As a tourist, one would not miss the signboards on the roadside, which lead the tourist to the Ilan Tourist Information Center. In a small display room the visitor studies a three-dimensional map of Ilan county. Eight boards display a condensed presentation of focal sites and agricultural specialties of the eight tourist zones within the county. One is reminded of Rutheiser's comments on Atlanta: "the visitors' center sells a comprehensive abridged vision of the city's past . . . that constitute its contemporary landscape."<sup>35</sup>

A complete cultural tour would include a banquet at *I Lan Cai* (Ilan cuisine) restaurant. Their pamphlet explains the differences between Ilan cuisine and the typical Taiwanese food. One of the house specials, *Guo Zha*, is often referred to when describing Ilan's collective personality. *Guo Zha* is made with deep fried ground chicken and egg, and served hot. Yet its coating appears cool and smokeless. It is said that *Guo Zha* symbolizes Ilanese characteristics as introverted and persistent, but with bursts of passion. According to the story, if one doesn't respect the enduring will of the seemingly gentle Ilan people, one will be surprised by the strength of their resistance. Therefore *Guo Zha* is also a metaphor for the long history of political resistance in Ilan. This story was told the first time I had *Guo Zha* with local cultural workers. It seems that the narrative gets re-introduced whenever there is a new guest at the table.

As with the interpretation of *Guo Zha*, many narratives are reified along this Ilan tour. For a tourist, Tung Shan River Park would be a prominent site that must not be missed. The visitors are expected to know that this exemplary park, built by Chen Dingnan in 1987, was the first public place in Taiwan built with an attentive postmodern aesthetic. The second featured attraction would be Lo Tung Sports Park, also planned by Chen Dingnan and finished by his following magistrate, Yu Hsyi-kun. It is the biggest city park in Taiwan and symbolizes the "pride of Ilan people," as one real estate sign displayed near the main entrance of the park.

## INVENTION OF TRADITION

The idea of inventing a tradition for the future is best illustrated in the organization of the "Ilan International Children's Folklore and Folkgame Festival." This has become the most important cultural and tourist event for Ilan County. Held every summer, this festival attracted an estimated NT\$72,000,000 in 1997, mainly coming from Taipei visitors. The county government devoted a major portion of their cultural budget and human resources to the Festival. The Festival work team was part of the county cultural office when I worked there in 1997.

The officially stated goal of the festival was to build Ilan into a "Children's dreamland," where the children of the world would meet and play together every year, and "obtain international friendship and cosmopolitanism."<sup>36</sup> Magistrate Yu said at a press conference that he wanted to "build dreams for the children and create their sweet childhood memories."<sup>37</sup> He declared, "'Children' symbolizes the future. There is a universal saying that 'children are the future owners of our country.'" By building Ilan into a Children's dreamland, the Ilan county government implied that Ilan is the future of the nation; the tradition Ilan created today would become the memories of future generations.

In order to boost further cultural tourism, the Ilan county government

coordinated the "Year One of Ilan's International Tourism" in 1997. The idea was to combine the international children's festival with township festivals, most of which were agriculture related. Various townships holding festivals at coordinated time slots throughout the year ensured that a year-round cultural calendar would be composed, according to which the tourist could come to Ilan at different times and enjoy a variety of activities.<sup>38</sup> Township festivals held in 1997 included "Leek and Garlic Festival" (Sanxing township, January 1), "Duck Festival" (Lize township, May 10–11), "Honeydew Festival" (Zhuangwei township, June–September), "Hot Spring Vegetable" (Jiaoxi township, July 28), "Mountain Atayal Festival" (Nanao township, August), "Taiwan Opera Festival" (Yuanshan township, August 30–31), "Kite Festival" (Dongshan township, September 28), and "Fish Festival" (Suao township, October 10–12).<sup>39</sup> However, the pace of the festival calendar did not continue in 1998. In that year only a few township festivals were held.

This model for international cultural tourism borrowed from other renowned international festivals. The Edinburgh Festival was one of its major sources of inspiration. I was asked to translate some documents from a brochure provided by the Edinburgh Festival Committee so the cultural office could use them to convince the new magistrate of the importance of cultural festivals in economic and political terrains. One dilemma which confronted the work team was how to represent Ilan's local culture on a globalized stage. Accordingly, the festival exhibited a combination of nativism and globalism. The Festival's blueprint stated that the festival was to serve as the central focus of county tourism, surrounded and accompanied by various community events and package tours. Therefore the translators and receptionists, most of whom were college students, were expected to be knowledgeable about the "must-see" sites to properly represent the county's culture to foreign visitors.

According to the 1996 plan, there were two predominant themes. First, international folk games. The festival collected games and toys from 37 countries. Second, children's folk dances. Ten troupes from nine countries were invited to perform folk dancing. This was the first time that Taiwan's native games and folk dancing were juxtaposed with other countries, rather than in relation to the regional vernacular of China. In addition to the cultural exhibition or performance, the festival built recreational equipment, such as a "water labyrinth" and an artificial hot spring. The whole design was to make a packaged tour for family with children, and to encourage them to stay in Ilan for at least one night. To that end, live performances were scheduled during the evenings.

The scale of the festival was expanded in 1997, when fourteen troupes from twelve countries participated. In addition to dance performances, an exhibition named "So Far, So Near" was set up to display an abridged version of the cultural geographical data of each participant country. The display was

meant to "educate the visitors about the concept of the global village."<sup>40</sup> Yet the most significant meaning of it was that Taiwan became the host of this global event, standing at an equivalent status with other nation-states.

The festival was a profitable experience. In 1996 there were some 196,000 tickets sold, yielding a profit of NT\$19,000,000.<sup>41</sup> In 1997, 284,101 tickets were sold with an income of more than NT\$72,000,000.<sup>42</sup> These numbers did not include profits from related service industries. Encouraged by this financial success, the county government then decided to make the festival a regular annual event, and thus part of the "new cultural tradition of Ilan."<sup>43</sup>

According to the festival committee, the ultimate goal was to build a Folkgame museum collecting folk games from Taiwan and other countries, which would eventually become the basis for folkgame studies. To that end, an international conference on children's folk games held in conjunction with the core festival was planned for 1998.<sup>44</sup>

The festival and a subsequent "International Rowing Competition" had political implications in addition to tourism. As Taiwan's de facto national status is not recognized by most countries in the world, it is difficult for Taiwan to participate in any international event. The festival, which involved 10 countries in 1997, increased Taiwan's international visibility. In an editorial, *The China Times*, wrote, "when the foreign rowers wandered among the green mountains and waters of Ilan... Taiwan thus entered into their mental map of global politics... Sports can become a successful diplomatic interaction."<sup>45</sup> Yu also stated that the festival helped Ilan to obtain its "cultural identity card" in the global era. In other words, the native cultures that Ilan has so earnestly promoted would become the basis upon which Taiwan could distinguish itself in the world.

## CONCLUSION

*The Story of Taiwan* published by the ROC Government Information Office characterizes Taiwan's culture as such:

Taiwan's special cultural heritage is the result of unique historical factors. . . . Over the past centuries, the island has been influenced by its indigenous peoples, the Dutch presence, Han culture during the China dynasty, Japanese colonization, and European and American concepts of modernization. In times, these influences have gradually become interwoven in Taiwan's cultural diversity and richness.<sup>46</sup>

As Taiwan entered into the 21st century, this sort of account of cultural pluralism based on the century-old foreign influences, China included, gradually became the dominant discourse of cultural heritage. The originally

paradoxical relationship between Taiwan and the cultural China finds its final resolution here: in this argument, Taiwan is certainly not just one region of China; rather, Taiwan goes further to claim that the "Chinese culture" is only part of its rich heritage. The burgeoning domestic cultural tourism as discussed in this chapter, then, is a manifestation of such narrative at the most tangible level. Through the concerted efforts of cultural institutions and local communities, an increasing number of places are made available to tourists; for ordinary citizens, the experiential opportunities of touring to different places *within* the island engender feelings of pride, since quality of leisure activity has often been used as a measure of the national progress.<sup>47</sup>

Another aspect of the travel cases is related to "Glocalization," meaning the interpenetration and simultaneous creations of the global and the local, which Robertson sees as the defining feature of a global society.<sup>48</sup> From Tanshui, which effectively incorporates foreign elements into a singular local culture, to Dadaocheng, where vanished colonial traces are composed by historically-informed guides into an opposite narrative both against the Chinese nationalist hegemony and the city's reckless modernization, finally to Ilan, where a progressive version of the national future is being constructed along with global cultural transaction, the local in Taiwan entails a complexity of implication. It is not just a parochial field refusing to be in contact with the global; neither is it a merely reactionary product as the counterpoint to globalism. My research suggests that the model of "global/local" dichotomy is not a productive analytic framework for the emergence of local cultures in Taiwan. The global (or the foreign) has always been a constituent of Taiwan's localities since Taiwan was first written into history.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Caren Kaplan, *Questions of Travel* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), 35.
- <sup>2</sup> Marshall Johnson, "Making Times: Historic Preservation and the Space of Nationality," *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique* 3, no.2 (1994), 178.
- <sup>3</sup> Natan, Urely, "Theories in Modern and Postmodern Tourism," *Annals of Tourism Research* 15 (1997), 267–283.
- <sup>4</sup> Ian, Munt, "The 'Other' Postmodern Tourism: Culture, Travel and the New Middle Classes," *Theory, Culture & Society* 11 (1994): 101–123.
- <sup>5</sup> David Lowenthal, *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 1.
- <sup>6</sup> The work of Marshall Johnson has elaborated on Taiwan's heritage institution and the "nationalist" history under the "old" KMT regime. My current chapter deals mainly with the new cultural tourism of the 1990s, in the subsequent (yet ruptured) time period to his paper.
- <sup>7</sup> Here I want to contest James Clifford's somewhat Euro-centric comment that "tourism still tends to be seen as a uniquely First World activity." See James Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 225.

- <sup>8</sup> Du Zhengsheng, *Taiwan xin Taiwan hun (The Heart and Soul of Taiwan)* (Taipei: Hepan chu ban she, 1996), 112.
- <sup>9</sup> Zhang Jianlong, 270–1.
- <sup>10</sup> Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York: Schocken, 1976), 10.
- <sup>11</sup> Rutheiser, *Imagineering Atlanta*, 12.
- <sup>12</sup> Johnson 1994, 178.
- <sup>13</sup> Quoted from Peter J. Fowler, *The Past in Contemporary Society: Then, Now* (London: Routledge, 1995), 151.
- <sup>14</sup> The term "old town" used here has different a connotation than the one addressed by Anagnost (1997); she used "old town" to refer to the re-built historic district in China, whereas my usage of old town simply relates to the official history of the town's settlement. It is worth noting that many of Taiwan's old towns have not been deliberately renovated, which then created an urgent sense of "loss" in Taiwan's public forum about historic preservation.
- <sup>15</sup> The term is drawn from Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Memoire*," *Representations* 26 (1989), 7.
- <sup>16</sup> In 1895 the house was purchased by Japanese government, then transferred to the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of China in 1945.
- <sup>17</sup> The buildings, marked by their arcade gallery, window ornaments, brick walls, and neat gardens, resemble many foreign concessions in mainland China, and thus are often filmed as college campuses in China, or even European settings, by filmmakers. The school principal likes to tell visitors his favorite episode during the tours he would lead: the story tells of a young man who fooled his illiterate yet wealthy parents with a picture taken on Tamkang campus, in order to defraud money for his "overseas education."
- <sup>18</sup> Stuart Hall, "The Local and the Global: Globalization and Ethnicity," in Anthony D. King, ed., *Culture, Globalization and the World-System: Contemporary Conditions for the Representation of Identity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 48.
- <sup>19</sup> Referred to Marc Auge, *Non-places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity* (London: Verso, 1995).
- <sup>20</sup> The mayoral election for Taipei city was banned by the KMT until 1994. Before then the Taipei mayor was always appointed by cabinet members. Vowing to solve Taipei's traffic congestion, a public shame to the international community, Chen declared that Taipei's traffic problem would be improved in two years, or he would resign from the mayorship. By the end of his second year in the city hall, the first MRT line began to function. Yet the real achievement only came one year later, when the Tanshui line was opened in March 1998. See Richard C. Kagan, *Mayor Chen Shui-bian, Taipei, Taiwan: Building a Community and a Nation* (Taipei: Asia-Pacific Academic Exchange Foundation, forthcoming).
- <sup>21</sup> Stevan Harrell, "Playing in the Valley: A Metonym of Modernization in Taiwan," in Stevan Harrell and Huang Chun-chieh, eds., (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994), 161–183.
- <sup>22</sup> Fowler, 67.
- <sup>23</sup> Ann Anagnost, *National Past-times: Narratives, Writing, and History in Modern China* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), 164.

<sup>24</sup> Hall, "The Local and the Global: Globalization and Ethnicity," 38.

<sup>25</sup> *Huwei Jie* 4 (1991), 22.

<sup>26</sup> George Mackay was nicknamed by the locals as "the black bearded foreigner." See Mackay, *From Far Formosa*.

<sup>27</sup> Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Translated by Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987).

<sup>28</sup> Ackbar Abbas, "Building on Disapparnace: Hong Kong Architecture and the City," *Public Culture* 6 (1994), 451, emphasis original.

<sup>29</sup> Quoted from Zhuang Yongming, *Daodacheng Xiaoyaoyou (A Joyful Trip to Dadaocheng)* (Taipei City Hall, 1996), 15, italic added.

<sup>30</sup> Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, 54.

<sup>31</sup> My rough argument here is parallel to Rosalind C. Morris's concise definition of "enframement." Inspired by Derrida, she defines "enframement" as "a process of judgment that attributes to the figure it delineates the values that come from without and that make such delineation possible in the first instance. A frame does not simply outline something; it produces the limits of that thing and makes it visible as such—even when the content that is framed is simply space itself." See Rosalind C. Morris, *In the Place of Origins: Modernity and its Mediums in Northern Thailand* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), 148.

<sup>32</sup> Zhuang, 57.

<sup>33</sup> Ivy, 103.

<sup>34</sup> MacCannell, 10

<sup>35</sup> Rutheiser, *Imagineering Atlanta*, 13.

<sup>36</sup> *The United Daily*, July 4, 1997, 14<sup>th</sup> section.

<sup>37</sup> *Taiwan Xinsheng Bao*, July 4, 1997, 15<sup>th</sup> section.

<sup>38</sup> Chen Gengyao, 365.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 367–8.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 284–5.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 275.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 286.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 291.

<sup>44</sup> Unfortunately, the Festival and its surrounding activities were called off in June 1998 due to a threatening spread of epidemics of that year.

<sup>45</sup> *The China Times*, September 18, 1996.

<sup>46</sup> The ROC Government Information Office, *The Story of Taiwan*, <http://www.gio.gov.tw/info/taiwan2000/culture/edown/2.htm> 1999, emphasis added.

<sup>47</sup> For example, a letter to *the China Times* makes such comparison between Taiwan's tourism with that of Japan and America. See <http://news.chinatimes.com/news/papers/online/forum/c9020590.htm>.

<sup>48</sup> Robert J. Holton, *Globalization and the Nation-State* (London: MacMillan Press Ltd., 1998), 16. Also read Roland Robertson, "Glocalization: Time-Space and Homogeneity-Heterogeneity," in Mike Featherstone, Scott Lash, and Roland Robertson, eds., *Global Modernities* (Sage Publications, 1995), 25–44.



Fig. 12. Tanshui Cultural Center



Fig. 13. Tamkang High School



Fig. 14. George MacKay's Clinic, Tanshui



Fig. 15. The Little White House, Tanshui



Fig. 16. The "Old Street," Tanshui (I)





Fig. 17. The "Old Street," Tanshui (II)



Fig. 19. The Kuang-yin Mountain, Tanshui



Fig. 18. MRT Tanshui Station

## AFTERWORD

**W**HILE I WAS COMPLETING MY DISSERTATION, A HEATED DEBATE REGARDING the official transliteration system developed in Taiwan. Foreigners who have been to Taiwan are probably aware of the infamous chaos of transliteration; an individual street or place name might have several translations. Unlike the PRC, Taiwan has not adopted a uniform transliteration system for Chinese characters. To resolve the confusion, a group of linguistic scholars from the most prestige research institution—Academia Sinica—began to develop the “General Romanization (*Tongyong Pinyin*)” system during 1998 and aggressively advocated it to the Ministry of Education (MOE). Contrary to their opinion, Zeng Zhilang, minister of the MOE, preferred *Hanyu Pinyin*, which was invented by the PRC and has become the standard Chinese transliteration system internationally since the 1980s. Zeng’s suggestion was subsequently overruled by his superior the Executive Yuan, however; up to now no final resolution has been made.<sup>1</sup> To further complicate the issue, the Taipei City Hall, led by a second-generation “mainlander,” decided to implement Hanyu Pinyin system in October 2000. Soon after, the contestation over the two transliteration systems became headline fare of the mass media. Some journalists even called it “yet another legitimacy crisis for the Chen Shui-Bian regime.”<sup>2</sup>

The Hanyu Pinyin supporters, including mainstream newspapers, interpreted the advocacy of “Tongyong Pinyin” as parochialism that would further isolate Taiwan from the international community, since Hanyu Pinyin is the international standard of Chinese transliteration. In my view however, the issue is more complicated than a simplistic dichotomy of globalism (Hanyu supporters) vs. localism (Tongyong supporters) that the commentators seemed to presume. Indeed, neither side was unaware of the necessity

of international communication for Taiwan, considering that only those who read western languages would take any interest in the transliteration issue. What really differentiated the two camps, then, was the repulsion held by the "Tongyong" advocates against the PRC's system. For example, Lin Meirong, an outspoken, pro-independence, anthropologist, wrote, "If Hanyu pinyin was applied to all the street signs in Taipei, I would mistake the city as Beijing"—a repulsive notion for her and others.

Hence, it is clear why some strong-headed people attacked the adoption of Hanyu pinyin as "a gesture of surrender to the PRC." The softer-spoken individuals, alternatively, argued that a distinctive pinyin system would highlight Taiwan's uniqueness; the world would note the individuality of Taiwan by its distinctive transliteration system, they argued. Unsurprisingly, some of the community activists, such as Chen Chi-nan and his team, supported this view.

I draw upon the pinyin anecdote to conclude my book. As I have demonstrated, the fear of being devoured by the PRC was a major motif behind the state's promotion of community-making movements. That anxiety becomes intensified when Taiwan faces the world and feels the urge to differentiate itself from the mainland in order to compete for international recognition. Through the active advance of the island's community making program, certain places (e.g. Ilan) and symbols (e.g. wooden clogs) were valorized as authentically Taiwanese (and thus non-Chinese). Therefore it may be clear now why Taiwan's localism intertwines with globalization; locality is operated within the global logic of differences.

With that objective in mind, the Taiwanese government has implemented some sizable programs to facilitate the interchange and alliance between its local communities and those of other countries. For example, the North Seattle Community College hosted a group of twenty culture workers from Taiwan in the summer of 2000. Funded by the Council for Cultural Affairs, those delegates attended morning classes of community planning at the North Seattle Community College and took afternoon fieldtrips to noted neighborhoods in Seattle. The alliance between the Fremont neighborhood association and Ilan county was highlighted during this trip.

When asked about her impression of the brief overseas trip, Ms. Zhuang, employed by the Ilan County Cultural Bureau, noted the contrasting level of governmental intervention in local community affairs between Taiwan and America. She said, "They [the Americans] are not like us. Their community organizations are very proactive and self-sufficient; governmental intervention is not necessary or even expected. Conversely, most of Taiwan's communities are still in their infant stage. Our [the county workers'] duties are to educate them, assist them until they become fully mature."

Zhuang's remark characterized an ironic facet of Taiwan's contemporary community making program: that this supposedly grassroots-oriented

project was initiated by the central government, directed by governmental workers and planners, and financed mostly by governmental subsidy. In Baimi's case, for example, the community has received over ten million NT of subsidy (US\$30,000) to develop its unprofitable wooden clog industry. A major proportion of the funding, it should be noted, was used to support a unique profession of "community planners;" they were mostly young professionals who worked closely with certain communities. Although not residing in those neighborhoods, they often took charge of the community affairs (especially cultural events), wrote grant proposals, and occasionally made organizational decisions for the residents. As I illustrated in Chapter five, this top down implementation of community programs often resulted in ephemeral movements, lasting until governmental attention faded. In other words, Taiwan has not fully entered into the "post-national" stage. The nation-state refashioned itself through the implementation of community-making programs. As a result, the transition of the state power structure has largely determined the direction of Taiwan's community policy.

In a different context, Asad interpreted the British official discourse of multiculturalism as "integral to the process of administrative normalization with the framework of the . . . state. Because fundamentally different traditions are described as necessarily contradictory (and therefore in need of regulation), state power extends itself by treating them as norms to be incorporated and coordinated."<sup>3</sup> While Asad's argument is illuminating in analyzing Taiwan's discourse of local diversity, I suggest that a historical analysis is necessary in understanding the "framework of the state." The association between "local culture" and the nation-state is a historically contingent concept in Taiwan. Not until the mid 1990s did "having a culture" shift from being primarily a characteristic of the bourgeoisie life to an imperative of ordinary citizenship in the state discourse. Under the imperative, culture became the desired manifestation of one unique collectivity, the authentic portion of a population demarcated by geographical boundary (a neighborhood, a town, a county, and an island).<sup>4</sup> As I illustrated in Chapters two and four, that shift of cultural concept was tied to the emergence of a new governmentality, which emphasized flexibility and pluralism. The proliferating of local cultures was celebrated as proof of an enriched, democratic, and self-sufficient citizen life.

Nonetheless, the diversity celebrated in this context is limited to "the safe zone of expressive culture," as Wilk noted in his research of Belize.<sup>5</sup> Only those intelligible to a specific structure of meaning can be recognized as culture. Thus, the wooden clog *is* the culture of Baimi, whereas the defining aspects of its landscape—dust, noises, and limestone factories—are not identified as part of the local characteristics. Due to Taiwan's capitalist nature, symbols of place were devoid of subversive connotations; the once powerful symbols for resistance and ethnic conflicts were normalized and appropriated

by cultural industries, in which place became a commodity for consumption and a spectacle for circulation (for example, the Kamalan symbols used in Ilan). In some cases such as Tanshui, they yielded additional value to the real estate market, sold to the wealthy to fulfill their "utopian nostalgia" that search for a safe and intimate community gated from the grubby reality. We have seen this in the "Ilan House" project, where an originally progressive movement for humane-scale buildings and environmental friendly architecture resulted in the construction of extravagant houses—due to Taiwan's skyrocket land prices—affordable only to the affluent. This might remind us of the gated community that Harvey describes, in which the images of place and the icons of the pristine past life are evoked, at an expense only affordable for the wealthy, to fulfill the "utopian nostalgia" of the bourgeoisies.<sup>6</sup> In Ilan's case, we have seen how the issues of economic inequality are often ignored, under the guise of "homeland" as a harmonious happy land.

What is the ultimate envisioning of such concerted cultural engineering? As I stated in the beginning of Chapter 2, the ultimate goal that the culture workers endeavor to achieve is to make Taiwan into a "powerful, cultural country (*wenhua daguo*)."<sup>7</sup> Just like numerous other discrepancies between the colorful cultural imaginary and the grim reality that I have described in previous chapters, this term "powerful country" (*daguo*) appears absurd, considering Taiwan's present condition. Yet the aspiration for being a *daguo* should be understood in a comparative and competitive sense. What Taiwan intends to compare itself to is, surely, the PRC. As I have argued in chapter 1, local diversity is used to gauge national progress, differentiating a diverse and democratic Taiwan from the supposedly hegemonic China.

In a recent commentary, Chen Chi-nan offered highlighting recognition to Ilan's cultural accomplishment. He said "If every county and city can devote itself to similar culture-oriented political practice, pretty soon, we believe, Taiwan will recover its old name as 'Ilha Formosa' (the beautiful Formosa)."<sup>7</sup> In other words, the original moment that the cultural workers would like to retrieve is the moment when Taiwan was named by the Portuguese during their geographic expansion period. Hence, the moment to return is indeed a moment of "naming," the time when Taiwan was first given an identity in the global scheme. Now the objective of building local places is to revive that moment, reconnecting Taiwan into the globally emerging discourse of localization.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> There have been rumors that Zeng may be replaced because of his insisting support of Hanyu Pinyin, which is in conflict with the ruling party's—the DPP—linguist policy. See [http://news.yam.com/times/tt\\_politics/news/200102/20010219160002455796.html](http://news.yam.com/times/tt_politics/news/200102/20010219160002455796.html)

<sup>2</sup> *The China Times*.

<sup>3</sup> Talal Asad, "Multiculturalism and British Identity in the Wake of the Rushdie Affair," *Politics and Society* 18, no.4 (1990), 465.

<sup>4</sup> Richard Handler, *Nationalism and the Politics of Culture in Quebec* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988), 14.

<sup>5</sup> Richard Wilk "Learning to be Local in Belize," in Daniel Miller, ed., *Worlds Apart: Modernity through the Prism of the Local* (London: Routledge, 1995).

<sup>6</sup> Harvey, *Spaces of Hope*.

<sup>7</sup> Chen Chi-nan, "Let's disseminate Ilan's experience: on local place, culture, and democratic politics" <http://www.ceformosa.org.tw>, January 2001.

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