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## Cultural Revitalization and Ethnic Identity of the Austronesian Peoples in Taiwan : 1980 to 1995

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## **Cultural Revitalization and Ethnic Identity of the Austronesian Peoples in Taiwan: 1980 to 1995**

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During the years from 1980 to 1995, Taiwan as a whole underwent a drastic change. In the social and political domains, with the revoking of a thirty-year-old martial law in 198X, the former authoritative political system gradually gave way to democracy and the whole nation's pace toward social pluralism accelerated. In the cultural and educational domain, in both academy and public forum, the stages were, to no small extent, dominated by discourses of post-modernism, deconstructionism and critical theory. Also during this period of time, a rather energetic surge of ethnic awareness became evident among the Austronesian speaking indigenous population of the island. The current article has a modest purpose, that is to provide a concise account of the historical background as well as the present state of the Indigenous Movement (原住民運動) in Taiwan. This is not to say, however, that the following observations and presentation are not theoretically informed. Following Barth (1969) and Comaroff (1987), I perceive ethnic consciousness as essentially an effort of boundary setting between two or more social groupings, and ethnicity a part of the general cultural classification system.

In his refutation of the Weberian view which treats ethnicity as a function of a kind of "primordial ties", Comaroff points out that, rather than the substance of ethnic identities, what is primordial in ethnicity is the marking of relations between social groupings.

According to Comaroff:

the marking of contrasting identities – of the opposition of self and other, we and they – is 'primordial' in the same sense that classification is a necessary condition of social existence. But the way in which social classification is realized in specific forms of collective identity, ethnicity no less than any other, is always a matter to be decided by the material and cultural exigencies of history (Comaroff: 306).

In other words, in trying to understand ethnicity, we have to bear in mind that:

ethnicity always has its genesis in specific historical forces, forces which are simultaneously structural and cultural (Comaroff: 303).

Therefore, while the emergence of ethnic awareness should be viewed as a product of the particular social system, the symbolic representations that are used

to consolidate a particular ethnic identity should be understood in cultural terms. In this "third proposition", contrasting totemic classification and ethnic classification, Comaroff (Comaroff: 307) states that "ethnicity has its origins in the asymmetric incorporation of structurally dissimilar groupings into a single political economy." Here "asymmetric" is a synonym of "structural inequality", and a major implication of structural inequality is the deprivation of the subordinate group the final control of the means of production and/or reproduction, so that the dominant group is able to regulate the terms upon which value may be extracted from it (Comaroff: 308).

Without venturing too far into the discussions of "cultural politics", I will treat Comaroff's propositions as a useful guide-line to orientate ethnographic observation and description. My basic concern can be stated as follows: What, if any, is the current state of meaning negotiation in the course of the Indigenous Movement in Taiwan, a society consisting of structural inequality and contesting meaning systems? Are the Austronesian indigenes actually rendered powerless in their cultural production and reproduction? Or is there genuine "negotiation" between the contesting systems so that new meanings are jointly produced by both the dominant and the subordinate groups? I do not pretend to aim at providing a definite theoretical answer to these questions. These questions serve as the implicit guide-line for the following descriptive account.

The contemporary structural context of the Indigenous Movement in Taiwan is primarily the colonial milieu instituted by the dominant Chinese majority. Historically, it is the product of consecutive colonization for the past three hundred plus years, first by early Chinese settlers and Chinese Imperial agencies (1662-1895), then by the Japanese authority (1895-1945) and finally by the Nationalist Chinese Government (1945-present). Official census data of 1985 set the number of the Indigenous population at 317,936, merely 1.64% of the population of Taiwan (Hsieh 1987: 10), a definite minority status.

Early sporadic and dubious records notwithstanding, it was not until after the 12th century that some degree of commercial contacts between Chinese and the indigenes of Taiwan were opened (Ts'ao 1967: 55). Chen (1964: 102-103), estimates that, by the time the Dutch arrived and established the first organized colonial authority in Taiwan in 1624, the Chinese population on the island was around five thousand. The entire island, including the western plain areas, the central mountain ranges and a narrow eastern coastal plan, was inhabited by Austronesian speaking peoples. A linguistic map of the distribution of these peoples was reconstructed by Ogawa and Asai (1935).

From 1624 to 1661, Taiwan was under the administration of the Dutch East India Company. From 1626 to 1642, the Spanish controlled the Taipei Basin and

the northern coast of Taiwan. Spanish missionary activities in Northern Taiwan began around 1629. Except for a few fortifications, little social and cultural impact remained after they were forced by the Dutch to leave in 1642. The Dutch, on the other hand, set up schools and a loose administrative system in the Southwestern plain of Taiwan. Aside from efforts to convert the indigenes to Christianity, the Dutch policy, basically, was to allow native customs to continue and rule indirectly through the chiefs and tribal elders. Major emphasis was placed on the establishment of a trading-post system for deerhides and rattan, the two major exports of the island at the time. Under a Dutch monopoly, deerhides were sold to Japan, and rattan was shipped, along with various goods from India, to China (Wen 1957: 33).

The indigenes that came into direct contact with the Dutch were the plain-dwelling groups of southwest Taiwan. However, the deerhide trade may have brought groups from the mountainous interior into indirect contact with the colonists, because a substantial portion of the traded hides were likely to have come from the territories occupied by these groups.

Dutch colonization ended in 1662. From 1662 to 1895, Taiwan was under consecutive Chinese authorities, first the Koxinga (國姓爺〔鄭氏〕) family and then the Ching Emperor. Around 1661, the population of Chinese settlers in Taiwan was between 25,000 and 50,000. By the end of this period of Chinese colonization, that figure had increased to 2,546,000. The population figure for Indigenes presented in a survey conducted in 1886 was around 150,000 (Wang 1967: 41). Unlike the Dutch colonists who came to trade, the Chinese immigrants were mostly farmers. Population pressure on the coastal provinces of southeastern China was the force behind their emigration. Conflicts over land resources between the Chinese settlers and the plain-dwelling indigenous groups (平埔族, hereafter called Plain Indigenes in this paper) grew acute during this period. Some rather strict laws regarding land leasing were enacted by the Chinese authority on behalf of the Plain Indigenes who had come into direct contact with the settlers. At least in its stated purpose, the authority was trying to insure that a fair return went to the Indigenes for leasing their land to the Chinese and that they were protected from losing the bases of their livelihood. However, with the increasing numbers of Chinese settlers, this protective policy, often plagued by executive corruption and the de facto dominance of the Chinese, was doomed to fail (Wen 1957: 52ff, 299-324). Both the land-holdings and the cultural identities of the Plain Indigenes suffered irreparably during this period.

Toward the “mountain-dwelling groups”, the Chinese authority oscillated between two antithetical policies: one can be described as “defensive segregation”, the other, literally, “development by pacification.” Under the “defensive segregation” policy, earth mounds and brick walls, along with guard posts, were built at strategic points or passages on the mountain ward fringes of the

settlements of both Chinese and Plain Indigenes, to deter attacks by the mountain groups. This was known as the Ai-yun line (隘勇線, literally “guardsmen line”). Thus, both geographically and legally, from the administrative point of view, the island was divided into two parts: a circumscribed mountain territory of the “untamed” Indigenes, and the plains areas in the north, west and south that accommodated the settlements of both Chinese and the acculturated Plain Indigenes. Many of these guard posts were manned by Plain Indigenes. The Ai-yun line thus placed the Plain Indigenes under the same regular administrative system as the Chinese settlers and facilitated the processes of acculturation as well as socio-economic assimilation of the former. Concerning this presentation, although it was not the apparent intention of the policy, this was the initial state intervention that caused the demarcation between the Austronesian groups that lived on the plains and those in the mountains. We will return to this point later.

On the other hand, under the “development by pacification” policy, the Chinese accepted-usually after applications of force-nominal subordination of the chiefs or headmen. Now ethnographers know that not every indigenous group in Taiwan had formal offices of chief or headman. But the Chinese officials at the time managed to identify, in each village or cluster of villages, a leader and installed him/her as the “headman”, known as tou-mu (頭目) or tou-ren (頭人) in Chinese and Japanese documents. For some villages, a number of full-time offices were created, to which Chinese or Plain Indigenes officials were appointed to supervise aboriginal affairs. Educational institutions, designed to impose Chinese customs and moral doctrines, were set up in some areas, but these had little effect among the mountain groups. On the whole, the administrative system-in most cases no more than a kind of nominal domination-was enforced through the local chiefs or leaders. This allowed the social and political systems of the “mountain-dwelling groups” to remain virtually independent of Chinese influences throughout the period while the Plain Indigenes were rapidly assimilated into the nominally Chinese society in all respects.

All this does not mean that “mountain groups” were experiencing no impact from the immigrants at all. During this period, trading relations between the Chinese and the mountain indigenes became closer and more direct. In addition to deerhides and rattan, camphor oil developed into an important commodity from the mountain areas and later became one of Taiwan’s major exports. Salt from the plains and coastal areas was probably one of the oldest and most critical commodities imported by the mountain Indigenes. In the early 18th century, as a result of incidents of violent confrontation, some local Chinese officials suggested that the salt supply of the mountain Indigenes be cut off, hoping that this would bring them to their knees (Wen 1957: 87). Also in this period, the Indigenes were importing considerable amounts of clothes, iron and firearms from the Chinese.

The latter two items had made the Indigenes more powerful in their confrontations with the settlers. In the latter half of the 19th century, a growing concern over the importation of arms to the Indigenes was evident by the number of prohibitions issued by the governing authority restricting the sale of muskets to the mountain Indigenes (Wen: 294).

Local Chinese officials' concerns and efforts notwithstanding, generally speaking, before the 1870's, the Peking authority remained aloof toward the affairs that involved mountain Indigenes. It was only after the "Rover" incident<sup>1)</sup> in 1867 and the Ryukyu shipwreck incident<sup>2)</sup> in 1871, that the Peking authority realized that, if it did not establish effective control over the mountain Indigenes, it might be inviting international interferences, that serious administrative measures were instituted and military campaigns launched to venture beyond the Ai-yun line.

Japan took over Taiwan in 1895 after having defeated China in the war of 1894. At that time, the Plain Indigenes were no longer a distinctive group that commanded special administrative measures. The basis of Japanese colonial policy was laid down in a report submitted to the Taiwan governor in 1902. According to the report, "the goal of managing the colony is to develop the economy of the mother country," therefore, "any resolution regarding aborigine affairs should be proposed and evaluated from economic and financial points of view" (Wen 1957: 659). During this period of time, the major attractions of Taiwan for the Japanese were its forest products (such as wood and camphor) and minerals, both of which were located in the mountains – the territory of the "untamed" Indigenes.

The Japanese administrative office in charge of Indigenous affairs was well organized and its mission well oriented. Although the administration was reorganized several times, basically it remained a two-track system with two objectives: economic development and law enforcement. The Japanese inherited the old Ai-yun system along with its defense facilities. Between 1896 and 1920, the guarding lines were steadily "advanced", which meant, in effect, the seizure of more land from the mountain Indigenes by force of arms. During this period of time, the Japanese carried out a number of important economic projects. Camphor production was increased in the northern part of the mountains. An island-wide resource evaluation was launched. Roads were constructed to cut across many parts of the mountain territory. In some areas, a proposal to confiscate fire arms was made. The Indigenes rebelled fiercely. In 1909, the incumbent Taiwan governor launched a "five-year project" which was, in fact, a series of military actions. Many battles were fought between the Japanese and the Indigenes. By the end of 1920s, the heavily manned guard line was replaced by the installation of land mines and electrified barbed wire. The mountain territory was more rigidly demarcated than before.

A total of thirty-nine major battles are recorded for the period between 1896

and the end of the 1920s. Continuous military action subordinated all the mountain Indigenes directly under the Japanese administration. Police stations and schools were established in most major villages. A vast amount of forest was placed under the control of the government Bureau of Forestation. After decades of military campaign, in the early 1930s, the Japanese authority deemed it necessary to "improve the living conditions" of the pacified Indigenes in order to stabilize its colonization. In addition to the setting up of schools and the provision of medical facilities in most villages, a number of "economic development" projects were launched, which included the introduction of wet rice farming, cattle herding and the silkworm industry. Some of the least accessible villages in the mountains were relocated in order to facilitate the overall economic reform.

In 1937, the second Sino-Japanese War started. In 1941, with the attack on Pearl Harbor, Japan became thoroughly involved in World War II. This brought about a new turn in Japanese administrative policy toward Taiwan in general and toward the Mountain Indigenes in particular. Now priority was given to the mobilization of all possible resources, human as well as material, for the military campaigns in China, Southeast Asia and the Pacific. A vigorous educational campaign was launched to promote the use of the Japanese language in both public and domestic life, the assuming of Japanese personal names, the conversion to Japanese customs, plus military training. Many men, Chinese and Indigenes alike, were drafted to combat in Southeast Asia; many of them did not survive the war. This period was generally known as the period of "Imperial-subjectification (皇民化運動)." The imprint of Japanese education had a long-lasting effect among the age cohorts that were between six and twenty years of age during the War.

With the end of World War II in 1945, the Chinese regained control over Taiwan, this time under the Nationalist government. No large scale military confrontation has occurred since. The Chinese authority inherited most of the facilities of the Japanese government-owned industries, including the Bureau of Forestation and the Bureau of Minerals that controlled substantial areas of land in the mountains. The geographically circumscribed "mountain territory" was transformed into a "mountain reservation". Police stations, renamed "check points", still remain at strategic locations along the passage connecting plain and mountain reservation. Under a new policy, however, the Indigenes are free to pass the check points or to move out of the reservation. Plain settlers, mainly Chinese, must have official permission to enter the reservation. The system is actually a part of the more comprehensive land tenure legislation which prohibits the selling of land in the reservation to non-indigenes.

Originated in 1722, the Ai-yun (guard line) system and the "reservation" system that succeeded it have for more than two hundred and fifty years successfully deterred extensive cultural contact between the mountain-dwelling

indigenous groups and the rest of Taiwanese society that formed on the plain areas. The Plain Indigenes, on the other hand, have almost been totally assimilated into the Chinese communities, with only two exceptions, the Amis and the Puyuma groups on the eastern coastal plain of the island. Because of its inaccessibility by land, the east coast of Taiwan was not very inviting to the early Chinese settlers. Before the Ryukyuan ship wreck incident (1871), the Chinese authority considered the area “behind the mountains (後山)” beyond its jurisdiction. Chinese settlers began to move into the area only after the mid 1870s, and only on a much smaller scale. Even after that time, the Amis and the Puyuma were never put behind the guard line or inside the mountain reservation territory. Their cultures, on the other hand, have largely remained distinguishable from the Chinese until present.

The Amis and the Puyuma, together with the Atayal, the Saisiat, the Bunun, the Tsou, the Paiwan and the Rukai in the mountain territory and the Yami on Botel Tobacco (Orchid Island), were thus identified by both Japanese and Chinese ethnologists as nine culturally distinguishable ethnic groups of Taiwan. This identification was then adopted by the Nationalist Chinese administration to define legal ethnic minorities, the members of which are entitled to a number of economic and social welfare privileges.

Other than these privileges and the aforementioned protectionistic reservation policy, all the indigenous populations are now under the same general administrative system as the Chinese.

The administration of indigenous affairs by the Nationalist Chinese government between the years 1945 and 1975 can be divided into three phases. The focus of the first phase, from 1945 to 1950, was on the establishment of local administrative systems. The second phase, starting from 1950, was marked by three campaigns: “life improving movement (生活改進運動)”, “sedentary farming (獎勵定耕農業)” and “forestation (育苗造林運動)”. The third phase, starting in 1957, was a modified version of land-reformation.

In the first phase, elections of local officials and representatives were instituted. No Chinese was eligible to serve as head official of indigenous district (鄉) or village (村). At the national level, four seats in the Legislative Yuan (立法院) were reserved for Indigenes. All elections were supposed to be anonymous and free. However, after the military defeat of the Nationalist government on mainland China and its retreat to Taiwan in 1949, martial law was declared. Although this did not stop the periodical holding of local elections, the single-party system under martial law allowed the Nationalist (KMT) party to monopolize all the political power and resources. Local party organization penetrated all the way down to the village level. Indigenous elites who joined the KMT enjoyed support from the party and stood an unbeatable chance in elections. A cohort of KMT loyalist indigenous political elites thus emerged in Taiwan’s politic. During the thirty plus



years between the 1950s and the 1980s, there was no active political opposition force generated among the indigenous population.

Although the focus of the second phase of the indigenous administration was on economic development, the first campaign, the "life improving movement", launched in 1950, has more bearings on the subject of the current paper. It was an un-apologetic campaign aiming at the Sinicization of the indigenous population. Among its goals were the promotion of things from Chinese language (Mandarin), "decent" clothing, chopsticks, and kitchen stoves to money saving. Things prohibited included alcoholism, "nudity", indoor burial, healing magic and other "superstitions". Whether these itemized goals were no more than a general moral statement in the minds of policy makers of that time is now beyond verification. In some areas, district and village level officials, mostly Chinese, carried out the instructions to such extremes as the destruction or burning of wood-carving objects, ancestral statues and ancient pottery. In some schools, children speaking their mother tongue were punished. The campaign indeed resulted in the fast vanishing of distinct cultural appearance among many indigenous communities. Because of the articulation and man-made quality of the policy, it both set the ground and served as a target for the cultural revitalization movement of the 1980s.

Land reform for the indigenous territory started in 1958. Under this policy, every man and woman capable of agricultural work was granted the title of a certain amount of land. The project was carried out over the entire mountain reservation as well as the non-reservation territory of the Amis and the Puyuma. Upon its completion, the project effectively changed the highly diversified traditional land tenure systems among different indigenous groups into a unified individual or household ownership system. For those groups who live in the mountain reservation, the title to the land can only be legally transferred to other indigenes. For the Amis and the Puyuma on the east coast, there is no such restriction; they are the groups that have been fast losing their land to the Chinese in the past thirty years.

To sum up the cultural as well as the socio-economic situation of Taiwan Indigenes on the eve of the Indigenous Movement of the 80s: (1) Politically, they were under the same state system as the other Taiwanese population. Free elections were instituted. However, under martial law, all political resources were controlled by the KMT. No real opposition party existed in Taiwan. Neither the indigenous population as a whole nor the population of an individual ethnic group was organized or mobilized into an interest group or a pressure group to back up the indigenous legislators. (2) Economically, improvement in material well-being notwithstanding, a sense of relative deprivation was growing. In some areas in the reservation, the cultivation of high yield cash crops was successful and the indigenous farm owners did enjoy a comfortable income. But in most places in the

reservation, cash income from agriculture was relatively low. A vast majority of the indigenous population under thirty years old found jobs as sailors, construction workers, factory workers and miners. At least in their own perception, they occupied the lower strata of the labor market in a globalized and capitalized economic system. (3) Culturally, a strong sense of lost identity was prevalent among the educated stratum. Indigenous languages were spoken less frequently and with less fluency among the younger generations. Under martial law, cultural pluralism and innovation were generally discouraged in Taiwan at the time. Press censorship was still in force and unorthodox opinions regularly crushed. The general population of Taiwan were either ignorant or had a distorted understanding of the indigenous cultures.

The starting point of the Taiwan Indigenous Movement is commonly identified as the publication of the underground journal “Kau Shan Ching (高山青)” by Evan Yukan, an Atyal student at National Taiwan University (cf. Hsieh 1989). The first issue of “Kau Shan Ching” was published in May 1983. The stated purpose of the journal was “to investigate the problems of the mountain territory, to arouse the self-awareness of the mountain population, to care about the mountain community and to attain self-help and self-salvation.” This was the first journal ever published by an indigenous intellectual who did not belong to the camp of KMT loyalists. Unlike a few regular journals published by mainstream political elites and devoted mainly to the propagation of official policy, “Kau Shan Ching” was critical, pointed and focused forcefully on the issues of cultural and ethnic continuation under the strong pressure of Sinicization and globalization.

In a sense, the publication of “Kau Shan Ching” can also be viewed as the indigenous chapter of the broader strife for freedom of speech and freedom of the press in Taiwan in the early 80s. Many unauthorized magazines were published during that period of time, mainly by Chinese political dissidents campaigning for the revoking of martial law, the general re-election of the national legislative body, the legalization of forming new political parties, and, underlying all these, the reconsideration of the mainland-oriented political agenda. At that time, then President Chiang Ching-kuo was in the last-years of his life. KMT policy toward the control of the press began to loosen up. The major opposition political body, the so-called “Tang Wai (黨外, literally “Without Party”)” emerged as a real political force. It was the forerunner of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP).

“Kau Shan Ching” and “Tang Wai” soon joined forces. In 1984, Evan Yukan attended a meeting of the “Tang Wai” which resulted in the forming of an “Ethnic Minority Committee” under the “Party”. This alliance also foreshadowed the forming of an Indigenous Committee under the DPP.

Towards the end of 1984, the “Taiwan Indigenous Rights Promotion

Association (臺灣原住民權力促進會)” was founded in the Mackay Memorial Hospital, a hospital in memory of the Canadian missionary George Leslie Mackay (1844-1901). The founding of the Association was significant in two respects. First, it was the first civil organization consisting of both Chinese and indigenous intellectuals from different groups. Second, it marked a strong coalition between the Taiwan Indigenous Movement and the Christian churches. Ever since its foundation day, graduates of local theological colleges and seminaries have always made up about thirty percent of the membership of the Association.

After 1984, the Association served as the action center of the Taiwan Indigenous Movement. It maintained close collaboration with the major political opposition force on the one hand, and the Taiwanese Christian community (principally the Presbyterian Church) on the other. One characteristic, in a sense the major weakness, of the Association soon became apparent in its operation. It was basically an association of college students and urban intellectuals. The KMT and its grass roots organization remained powerfully intact and functioning well at the village and district levels. There was very little interaction, save in a very personal respect, between the KMT political elites and the members of the Association. In 1988, the association organized a major demonstration in Taipei for the reformation of the land tenure system in the reservation and public awareness of the land shortage problem of the Amis and the Puyuma. It managed to transport some forty bus-loads of people at home from the villages to Taipei for the march. The mobilization at the local level was entirely a Presbyterian Church operation.

Into the 1990s, with the strengthening of its grass roots organization, the DPP started to nominate its indigenous candidates for local as well as national elections. So far, except for a few seats in the local legislative body, little ground has been gained by the DPP’s indigenous candidates in the administrative section and the national legislative level.

The intellectuals behind the Indigenous movement won themselves a major victory in 1994. Starting in 1992, the Indigenous movement launched a campaign for a new and “correct” appellation of the Indigenes. After the end of World War II and the reinstallation of Chinese administration, the indigenous population was officially designated the “Mountain Peoples (高山族)” or the “Mountain Compatriots (山胞)”. The goal now was to change the official designation into “Indigenous Peoples (原住民)”. Since this involved a change in the Constitution, the major advocates invoked extensive lobbying, congressional hearings, press coverage and public debate. The effort met the stubborn resistance of the authority. Ethnological and archaeological evidence was cited by the Chinese authority to “prove” that the Austronesians were not THE original settlers of the island. In the course of debate over the issue, the Chinese authority variously proposed

appellations such as “Early Settlers (早住民)”, “Antecedent Settlers (先住民)” and even “Minority Nationalities (少數民族)” as substitutes. But the indigenous advocates would not give in. The reasons given by the indigenous advocates in insisting upon this particular appellation is that (1) It highlighted the fact that the Austronesian peoples were the “original” inhabitants of the island of Taiwan, and (2) Only with a change of the appellation into “the right one” could Indigenous Peoples’ rights in land, political, economic, educational, social and cultural affairs be secured.

After two years’ protest and confrontation, the National Assembly finally conceded to the request and endorsed the change in 1994. Instead of further profits in political and economic terms, however, the major gains which have been thus far materialized are in the literary sphere. With the officialization of the term “Indigene” and “Indigenous(原)”, which also means “original”, “primordial” or “in-depth contemplation and investigation” in Chinese, various flourishing indigenous cultural events and performative art teams are now proudly self-designated as 原色 (“Indigenous Color” or “Original Color” for an art exhibition), 原舞者 (“Indigenous Dancer” or “Primordial Dancer” for a dance company) and 原報 (“Indigenous News” or “Deep Investigating News” for a newspaper). In the meantime, a second round of land tenure reformation lobbying and demonstration is on the way, very much following the regular rules of the game of political wrestling and not facilitated by a simple change of collective appellation.

Another noticeable development in the Indigenous movement in the 1990s that deserves our attention was the resurgence of Plain Indigenous identity. After being considered totally Sinicized for more than one hundred years, Plain Indigenous identity is now gaining popularity. One of the incidents that triggered this resurgence was the “Anti-Fourth Nuclear Power Plant Movement” sponsored basically by the DPP party and the environmentalist groups of Taiwan. At the climax of the confrontation between the Power Company and the opposition forces in 1994, an archaeological site was discovered on the designated site of the power plant. Some Local residents of reputed Kadagalan descent came forward to identify the olive tree on the site as the legendary landmark of Kadagalan village. Architectural and ceramic remains were recovered from the site. The context of environmentalism vs. nuclear power plant gave the cultural significance of the site extra popularity, and more and more nominal Chinese residents in the neighborhood started to pick up their Kadagalan identity again.

The resurgence of Plain Indigenous identity was also fueled by the writing of at least one journalist, who, based on the simple historical “facts” that early Chinese immigrants from Southeast China were exclusively male, advocated that, matrilineally speaking “We are all Plain Indigenes!” The long-term effect of such

a declaration is not yet evident. But the momentum of the declaration should be understood in the context of (1) the invoking of a “biological fact” that there is definitely some trace of Austronesian “blood” in all the Chinese settlers who came to Taiwan before 1949, and (2) a general feministic oriented challenge toward the reputed Chinese patricentric ideology in group identity. Nowadays, pressure from the descendants of Plain Indigenes is mounting to request the formal recognition by the authority of the Plain Indigenes as the Tenth (or the Eleventh) Indigenes group.

To briefly conclude the historical account, I would make four points:

- (1) In the early stage of the Taiwan Indigenous Movement, the ethnic boundary adopted by the indigenous activists was a product of the original Ai-yun (guard line) system.
- (2) The emergence of the Indigenous Movement of Taiwan in the past fifteen years is an integral part of the general social and political movement of Taiwan society after forty years of martial law.
- (3) The subordinate group does have the room to negotiate the meaning of the cultural representation it chooses to consolidate its ethnicity. Although the general context is that of the Chinese literary convention, new meanings and new usages can be produced by the manipulation of representation by the Indigenes to their advantage. The more tangible returns from this “victory” in the cultural domain are, however, not yet clear.
- (4) The resurgence of the Plain Indigenous identity should be understood in the context of confrontation on an even larger scale. In the structure of global environmentalist vs. developmentalist confrontation, the power and momentum over the control of cultural production and reproduction can be shifted from the hands of the local dominant group to the subordinate group. I would even venture to interpret the meaning of “We are all Plain Indigenes” in the light of the confrontation between Taiwan and Mainland China. But that will have to wait for another occasion.

## Notes

- 1) In 1867, an American ship named the “Rover” was wrecked on the south coast of Taiwan. The survivors drifted ashore, and were slain by some Paiwan from nearby Kulalus village. Upon learning of the tragedy, the American ambassador in Peking made a protest to the Chinese government. However, the response from the latter was to the effect that Taiwan was not a territory of the Emperor, and there was no way to deploy troops to that area. Only after the U.S. government threatened to take things into their own hands by sending a force to southern Taiwan, did the Chinese government agree to deploy troops to a nearby area.
- 2) In 1871, sixty-six Ryukyuan drifted onto the southeast coast of Taiwan; fifty-four of

them were slain by the Paiwan of Shinbauzan village. The remaining twelve were rescued and escorted to Tainan, then the capital of Taiwan, by some Chinese settlers, and from there, were sent back to Ryukyu. The Ryukyu authorities referred the matter to Japan (The Ryukyu Islands formed an independent kingdom until 1879, thenceforth they became an integral part of Japan. Since the 14th century, however, both Chinese and Japanese had been claiming sovereignty over the Islands.) and appealed to the latter for assistance. The next year, 1872, after an official protest was again rejected by the Chinese government, for the reason that it had no jurisdiction over the indigenes, the Japanese sent a fleet to Taiwan, landed on the south coast, attacked Shinbauzan and neighboring villages, and killed the chief of Shinbauzan. After a strong protest from the Chinese government, Japan agreed to withdraw its forces, and a treaty was signed by the two countries in Peking. The Chinese government acknowledged the justification of Japan's action, agreed to compensate Japan for the expenses of the punitive expedition, and promised to restrain the Indigenes from such actions in the future.

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