

Women in Cyakang Village, Taiwan

by

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Abstract

This thesis examines the 'status of women' among the Taroko, an indigenous people of Taiwan. I situate the Taroko within the broader literature on indigenous peoples worldwide, their histories of dispossession and conquest, and the more recent emergence of a potent political force, the international indigenous peoples' rights movement. I also situate my discussion of the Taroko within Taiwan's history and political economy as well as within the existing ethnographic literature on Taiwan's indigenous peoples. The thesis is based on three months fieldwork in Cyakang village, spent mainly speaking and interacting with the women of the village. Following from the observation that there is no single unitary phenomenon such as '*the* status of women' in any particular society, I focus on both positive and negative aspects of women's lives in Cyakang. The negative aspects centre on drinking and violence; the positive aspects centre on women's roles in politics, the economy, and ritual. This thesis is a contribution to the literature on the Taroko. It is also an original contribution to the literature on indigenous peoples in Taiwan, especially on indigenous women in Taiwan. It is also a contribution to the literature on the emergence of a political agenda among Taiwan's indigenous peoples in recent years.

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Chapter One –Introduction

This thesis focuses on Taroko women. The Taroko are an indigenous people of Taiwan. The indigenous population of Taiwan in October 2007 was 482,798, which comprises 2.1 percent of Taiwan's total population of 22,934,997 (Council of Indigenous Peoples 2007a). The Taroko have a population of 23,383, which comprises 4.8 per cent of Taiwan's indigenous population. Of those, there are 19,664 registered Taroko living in Hualien County (84 % of all Taroko); the remaining Taroko live in Nan-tou County (Council of Indigenous Peoples 2007a). (Maps locating Taiwan, and the townships, counties, and villages mentioned in this thesis are in Appendix I.)

Thirteen indigenous groups were officially recognized as such by the Republic of China in January 2007: Atayal, Saisiyat, Bunun, Tsou, Rukai, Paiwan, Puyuma, Amis, Yami, Thao, Kavalan, Truku, and Sakizaya (Council of Indigenous Peoples 2007a; A.P.C. Monthly 2007:1, 4-5). Simon (2007a: 3, 7-8) notes that the Taroko were recognized as a people, separate from the Atayal, only in 2004: "the Taroko People...argu[ed] that the Taroko constitute a nation distinct from the Atayal [because] of their collective name, sense of common blood, collective memory of struggle against the Japanese, a shared culture, heritage, and experience of living together."¹

¹ The naming of Taiwan's indigenous peoples is a complex issue that arose out of the Japanese conquest and colonial administration, to be discussed further in Chapter Three. Atayal or Tayal are the Romanized forms of the Japanese transcriptions given by Japanese anthropologists for those indigenous people in Taiwan's mountainous regions. Simon (2007: personal communication) states that "For most purposes, it is useful to speak of a pan-Atayal or pan-Tayal grouping." But one grouping in the eastern part of this region called themselves Sediq. "The Sediq are further grouped into three dialects: Truku, Tkedaya, and Teuda" (Simon 2007: personal communication). In summary, then, the Atayal (or Tayal) grouping includes the subgroup of the Sediq, which is, in turn, divided into three dialect groupings. The ones in Hualien County have gained legal recognition as the Truku tribe or Taroko Nation (Simon 2007: personal communication).

I am a non-indigenous Taiwanese and an anthropology student in an M.A. program at Carleton University. Scott Simon, an anthropology professor in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at the University of Ottawa, hired me as his research assistant for the summer of 2006 to join him in Cyakang, a Taroko village, for three months of anthropological research. Simon is fluent in Mandarin and has carried out fieldwork and research in Taiwan for the past decade or so. Simon had carried out previous research in another Taroko village, but this summer was the first research for both of us in Cyakang. Simon and I lived in Cyakang from May to August 2006. We lived in a rented house, left unoccupied by its owner, in the middle of the village. Cyakang is a village of approximately 2,200 inhabitants.

Our research methods consisted mainly of standard anthropological “participant observation”: living in the village, observing and participating in activities, and simply “hanging out” (as discussed in any standard text dealing with anthropological research methods, such as Bernard 2006, Ellen 1984, or Robben and Sluka 2007). Following standard anthropological practice, the names of all Taroko individuals mentioned in this thesis are pseudonyms.

In addition to such standard participant observation, Simon and I also carried out a census of village businesses (mainly small general stores, often in people’s living rooms, and sometimes without any signage to indicate what was going on inside). A local research assistant, hired by Simon, also conducted a survey, asking 99 people in the village basic questions about their language, their religion, their economic activities (paid and unpaid), and their political views, including views on autonomy and self-government for the Taroko. This same assistant also helped with the statistical analysis of the data collected in these surveys and censuses.

I was hired by Simon mainly to interact with Taroko women and to prepare field notes daily. As a result I spent most of my time in the company of women. I often went with the women to their agricultural fields, where they fed their chickens, watered plants, and harvested vegetables. I also spent a lot of time in the small shops managed by some women, both talking and observing what was going on and also sometimes helping in the shops, especially when the women shopkeepers were busy feeding their kids. I also observed and/or participated in election campaigns, ritual occasions, and other activities discussed later in Chapters Five and Six. Simon and I were particularly struck by what we perceived to be the frequent drinking of alcohol by the Taroko, both men and women, but especially men. In addition, women spoke to me about, and I observed, men's violence against women, mostly when the men had been drinking. At the same time, I was also impressed with the important roles which women held and the fact that they were not meek and weak, but rather largely independent and autonomous in many spheres.

After my fieldwork in Taiwan, when I was preparing to utilize that research as the basis for my Master's Thesis, I immersed myself in the literature on the nature of indigenous peoples worldwide, their histories and their dispossession and destruction. I attempted to examine the limited literature on gender, drinking and violence within indigenous communities. I also read some of the literature on the anthropology of gender and on the international indigenous peoples' rights movement. And, of course, I also read materials on the history of Taiwan and its indigenous peoples (in Taiwan, as a student, we studied Chinese culture and history, not the history of Taiwan; and of course, the study of indigenous peoples has never been emphasized within the dominant cultures and societies in which they find themselves). Finally, I also examined the limited amount of materials available on the Taroko themselves (this mainly

involved the published and unpublished writings of Simon; a lot of other materials are only available in Japanese (which I cannot read) or are only available in Taiwan itself (without electronic access).

In dealing with indigenous peoples, gender and alcohol, and indigenous peoples, gender and violence, I am aware that I must avoid the common and stereotypical Western view of indigenous people as 'drunk' and 'violent,' often arguing that their abuse of alcohol is the cause of their impoverishment, rather than a consequence of their cultural dislocation and destruction. In fact, some, like Chandler and Lalonde (1998) argue that the use of alcohol may be part of an attempt at maintaining some cultural autonomy in the face of impoverishment and cultural dislocation. Chandler and Lalonde (1998: 191) argue that fighting for a sense of cultural identity and cultural continuity might help to lower suicide rates (sometimes associated with substance abuse) among indigenous peoples (especially the young). They also argue (1998: 192) that when indigenous peoples are engaged in community practices that promote a collective effort to "preserve and rehabilitate their own cultures," youth suicide rates are dramatically lower (and, presumably, the same would apply to substance abuse as well).

Indigenous peoples worldwide are generally found at the bottom of almost all social indicators, such as income, unemployment rates, educational attainment, infant mortality, longevity, incarceration rates, substance abuse, and suicide rates. Indigenous women are often portrayed as oppressed and subordinated within indigenous cultures and societies. An argument can be made that this also applies to the indigenous peoples of Taiwan, including the Taroko. More recently, indigenous peoples worldwide are joining together in an international movement for recognition of the human rights of indigenous peoples and to reclaim their 'rightful place' in

the world as autonomous peoples with some right to self-determination and autonomy. Again, the Taroko and other indigenous peoples in Taiwan have also recently joined in fighting for recognition as part of this international indigenous peoples' rights movement.

My research question grew out of my fieldwork and subsequent attempts at making sense of some of what I observed and read; this is sometimes referred to as "grounded theory." The central question of this thesis is the extent to which the Taroko women of Cyakang are oppressed and/or the extent to which the Taroko women of Cyakang are autonomous and independent. Research in anthropology and other disciplines have established the fact that there is no single unitary phenomenon such as "*the* status of women" in any particular society or culture. The status of women in any particular society or culture includes many domains and spheres of social life. In some, such as the economy, women's status may be relatively high, while in others, such as political decision-making, women's status may be relatively low. In addition, any given society or culture may have different groups or categories of women, such as women of different ranks, ethnicities, classes, etc., and one would expect that 'the status of women' in that society would be considerably different for those different groups of women.

In order to situate this discussion, I first examine the literature on indigenous peoples worldwide, their histories of dispossession and destruction, and the more recent emergence of the international indigenous peoples' rights movement. The Taroko have recently been officially recognized as one of the indigenous peoples of Taiwan and they are participating in this international movement. Chapter Two also includes a review of some of the existing literature on indigenous peoples, gender, the use and abuse of alcohol, and violence.

In Chapter Three I present a concise history of Taiwan's indigenous peoples, in order to situate the Taroko, who are discussed in the following chapters. This history begins with Taiwan's indigenous peoples prior to contact with outsiders, but focuses mainly on the impact of colonialism and waves of immigration of foreigners, both European and Asian, to the island, from the 17th century to the present. This discussion touches on the influence of various European powers, Manchurian and Han Chinese, the Japanese, Chiang Kai-shek and the Chinese Nationalist Party (Kuomintang), and ends with a discussion of Taiwan's recent turn to 'democracy.' Chapter Three concludes with a discussion of how Taiwan's indigenous peoples are now joining the international indigenous peoples' rights movement discussed in Chapter Two.

Chapter Four presents material on the Taroko from the existing literature; it focuses heavily on Simon's ethnography, both published and unpublished. The chapter discusses the economy, the gendered division of labour, and aspects of belief and ritual (focusing especially on a moral code known as *gaya* and more recent conversions to Christianity). I also examine the little material that exists on the Taroko that deal with the issues of gender, alcohol use, and violence.

The heart of my original contribution to the thesis is presented in Chapters Five and Six, which summarize the results of my fieldwork in Cyakang during the summer of 2006. Paralleling Chapter Four, in Chapter Five I discuss the economy, the gendered division of labour, and aspects of belief and ritual. I also focus on alcohol, gender, and male violence against women.

Chapter Six is also based on my fieldwork. As my job was to focus on women in Cyakang, I came to see that, in addition to my initial impression of women as the 'victims' of occasional male drinking and violence, I also came to see that women in Cyakang were also involved in

various domains of village life that are empowering because the women find them meaningful and they give women some respected social roles in the community. I illustrate the independence and autonomy of women's lives in particular spheres of life, such as their roles in the Farmers Association, dances, and local elections.

The conclusions relate the situation of the Taroko as typifying the plight of indigenous peoples worldwide, both in terms of their history of conquest, dispossession, disempowerment, etc., and in terms of their survival and the more recent attempts at achieving some form of autonomy or self-determination as part of the international indigenous peoples' rights movement. I also conclude that, as in every society, Taroko women are oppressed in some areas of life, especially as victims of male violence, but are also independent and autonomous in other domains of social life, including politics and the economy.

Chapter Two – Indigenous Peoples and the Indigenous Peoples’ Rights Movement

In this chapter I review the literature on the situation of indigenous peoples worldwide. I examine indigenous peoples today, often after decades or centuries of conquest and domination by outsiders. I include a brief review of gender and the roles of alcohol and violence in indigenous communities. Then I examine the more recent development of the indigenous peoples’ rights movement as part of the larger politics of human rights. Later in the thesis I discuss how the Taroko typify this general portrait of indigenous peoples worldwide, including the role of women, the use and abuse of alcohol, and violence.

David Maybury-Lewis helped to found Cultural Survival, an organization that supports indigenous peoples in their fight to have input in determining their future. He notes that “most people in the world are “indigenous” to their countries in the sense of having been born in them or being descended from people who were born in them. Indigenous peoples are clearly native to their countries in this sense too, but they also make another claim, namely that they were there first and are still there and so have rights of prior occupancy to their lands” (Maybury-Lewis 2002: 6).

This distinction, Maybury-Lewis (2002: 6) notes, is easily made in so-called “settler societies” such as the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, but it is more difficult to clearly differentiate between indigenous peoples and others elsewhere in the world, especially in Africa and Asia, where there are long histories of migrations and conquests prior to European “discovery.” So there are other criteria used to define indigenous peoples: “Indigenous peoples claim their lands because they were there first or have occupied them

since time immemorial. They are also groups that have been conquered by peoples racially, ethnically, or culturally different from themselves. They have thus been subordinated by or incorporated in alien states that treat them as outsiders and, usually, as inferiors” (Maybury-Lewis 2002: 6). In addition, indigenous peoples “maintain their own languages, which normally differ from those spoken by the mainstream populations, and their own cultures, which invariably differ from the mainstream. They are conscious of their separate identities and normally struggle to retain these. The salient characteristic of indigenous peoples, then, is that they are marginal to or dominated by the states that claim jurisdiction over them” (Maybury-Lewis 2002: 6-7).

Although there are different, and contested, meanings and debates over exactly who is “indigenous,” and although the UN does not have a legally binding definition of “indigenous peoples,” it generally uses one proposed by José Martínez Cobo, the Special Rapporteur to the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities:

Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those which have a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of societies now prevailing in those territories, or parts of them. They form at present non-dominant sectors of society and are determined to preserve, develop, and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories, and their ethnic identity, as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal systems. (Cobo 1986, 5: para. 379; quoted in Hodgson 2002: 1039)

Hodgson (2002: 1039) further notes that “Cobo emphasizes self-identification as central to the definition of *indigenous* and stresses historical precedence and cultural difference as aspects of indigenous status. In addition, however, Cobo acknowledges the unequal

power relations that exist in many states by noting “non-dominance” as another common characteristic of indigenous peoples.”

Nation-states have variously sought to eradicate or to assimilate any indigenous people existing within their borders. The physical extinction of indigenous peoples is a form of genocide and charges of genocide against indigenous peoples have been made in various parts of the world. And, although, as Maybury-Lewis (2002: 7) notes, genocide “is today universally condemned,” it “continues to take place and indigenous peoples are especially at risk because they are so vulnerable.”

In contrast, “*ethnocide* (the destruction of a people’s way of life) is...often not even condemned when it comes to indigenous peoples. On the contrary, it is advocated as an appropriate policy towards them. Indigenous peoples are normally looked down on as “backward,” so it is presumed that their ways of life must be destroyed, partly in order to civilize them and partly to enable them to coexist with others in the modern world” (Maybury-Lewis 2002: 7). Assimilation is a form of ethnocide, and many nation-states have attempted to assimilate their indigenous peoples into the dominant population and make them “citizens” of the nation-state, like all other citizens.

Indigenous peoples have been dominated and marginalized, as the above quotes note, and they are generally the most powerless and impoverished people in the various nation-states in which they find themselves.

The demographic consequences were disastrous everywhere. Indigenous peoples were conquered by superior weaponry. Sometimes they were subject to campaigns of extermination. More often they were driven off their lands or confined to a portion of them, if they did not flee. Meanwhile they were highly susceptible to

infections transmitted by their more cosmopolitan conquerors. The results were impoverishment, starvation, and disease, which also took a fearful toll on their populations. (Maybury-Lewis 2002: 10)

Even in today's world, indigenous peoples remain at the bottom of almost all social and economic indicators, such as income, unemployment levels, poverty, educational attainment, infant mortality, longevity, incarceration rates, substance abuse, and suicide rates. In a recent book entitled *Indigenous Peoples and Poverty: An International Perspective*, the editors note that: "[A]round the world, in vastly different cultures and settings, indigenous peoples are nearly always disadvantaged relative to their non-indigenous counterparts. Their material standard of living is lower; their risk of disease and early death is higher. Their educational opportunities are more limited, their political participation and voices more constrained, and the lifestyles and livelihoods they would choose are very often out of reach." (McNeish and Eversole 2005a: 2)

"Not all the people in all these indigenous groups are poor. Many are not. But in country after country, region after region, the pattern repeats itself: people who are indigenous are much more likely to be poor than their non-indigenous counterparts" (McNeish and Eversole 2005a: 2) There is "a 'cost' to being indigenous": indigenous peoples around the world, in general, and compared to their non-indigenous counterparts: have less schooling, lower earnings, are more likely to live below the poverty line, their life expectancy is lower and infant mortality is higher, malnutrition and diseases are more common, they are more likely to live in unsafe and inadequate housing, and more likely denied access to safe water and sanitation. (McNeish and Eversole 2005a: 2-3). "In most countries, indigenous peoples have less access to education

than other groups, and they are often subjected to curricula designed for other cultural groups which ignore their own history, knowledge and values” (McNeish and Eversole 2005a: 3). A statement from the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations notes that “indigenous peoples worldwide continue by and large to be disadvantaged in every area of life” (Daes 2000; quoted in McNeish and Eversole 2005a: 3).

The existing literature on indigenous peoples also deals with gender and the specific situation of indigenous women. Regardless of whether “women’s status” was relatively ‘high’ or ‘low’ in a particular indigenous community prior to contact and conquest by outsiders, their status once social and cultural changes are introduced, seems to decline. If indigenous peoples in general (read: men) have been dispossessed, dominated and marginalized, women are today often in an even *more* oppressed position than the men of their communities.

There are few works in the academic literature on indigenous peoples that examine the use and abuse of alcohol. Sagers and Gray’s book *Dealing with Alcohol: Indigenous Usage in Australia, New Zealand and Canada*, is one that does. The authors state that, when they earlier wrote a book on Australian Aboriginal health they included reference to alcohol and other substance misuse, “but did not emphasize it” because they were concerned “that discussing the harm that alcohol and other drugs causes to Aboriginal people could contribute to racist ‘blaming the victim,’ a concern shared by many Aboriginal people” (Sagers and Gray 1998: 2). “Having introduced alcohol to Aboriginal people and then having used it as a weapon against them, non-Aboriginal people now blame Aborigines for their poverty, unemployment, and other problems, wrongly attributing the cause of all Aboriginal problems to their ‘abuse of

alcohol” (Australia, National Aboriginal Health Strategy Working Party 1989: 197; quoted in Saggars and Gray 1998: 1).

Many non-indigenous people share the view that indigenous people drink excessively: “In countries such as Australia, New Zealand and Canada, many non-indigenous people cling to stereotypes in which all indigenous people misuse alcohol and are believed to be indifferent to the consequences of such misuse” (Saggars and Gray 1998: 12).

But Saggars and Gray (1998: 12) also note that there is great difficulty in obtaining valid data on how much indigenous people actually drink. They note that some indigenous people drink alcohol, others do not; some drink to excess, others do not. But they also note: “Although at the aggregate level, larger proportions of indigenous populations consume alcohol in a harmful fashion” (Saggars and Gray 1998: 68).

As Saggars and Gray (1998: 24) state: “When considering the misuse of alcohol and associated harm, the fundamental question that arises – and one that this book seeks to answer – is whether alcohol misuse is the cause or the consequence of the social problems confronted by indigenous peoples.”

Saggars and Gray (1998: 43) state that colonists often introduced alcoholic drinking to indigenous peoples: “Although in some instances there may have been elements of hospitality involved, generally alcohol was not introduced by the colonists for reasons of altruism. While there are reports of colonists providing indigenous people with alcohol in order to selfishly observe their drunken antics, alcohol played a more significant role as a means of exchange, and it was thus in the interests of the colonizers to encourage indigenous drinking and demand

for alcohol.” Saggers and Gray (1998: 4) also note that “In each country, too, there are stories of the ways in which settlers used alcohol to bribe people to stay in their employment or to buy sex from indigenous women.”

In contrast to the view of many non-indigenous people, Saggers and Gray (1998: 4) argue that “The history of alcohol and other drug problems among indigenous peoples in each of the countries is inextricably linked to their respective colonial histories...It was the lethal combination of the invading colonists, dispossession from ancestral country and hence from a sustaining economy, and subsequent years of marginalization that appears to have contributed to the devastating impact of alcohol, in particular.” Saggers and Gray (1998: 24) argue that the misuse of alcohol is “an attempt to ease the suffering imposed by European colonialism – another of the consequences of dispossession and exclusion, but one which in turn causes indigenous people to harm themselves.” Indigenous peoples “became victims of the use of alcohol as a means of escape” (Saggers and Gray 1998: 44). Alcohol is used as a means of “dealing with psychological stress and the loss of individual autonomy, identity and self-esteem”; alcohol misuse, along with suicide, are results of dispossession and powerlessness (Saggers and Gray 1998: 74, 80).

The literature on indigenous peoples and alcohol use rarely mentions women. Because of their responsibilities for their family’s well-being and survival, it appears that women drink less than men.

Despite the fact that indigenous peoples throughout the world are poorer than non-indigenous peoples, and despite the fact that indigenous peoples are lower on almost all indicators of well-being, there is a persistent view among non-indigenous peoples that indigenous people are

somehow “privileged.’ For example, in discussing the current situation in Canada, Warry (2007: 17) notes that non-indigenous people believe that Canada’s “Aboriginal peoples are somehow privileged because they have special access to land.” Warry (2007: 35) notes that, because Canada’s relationship to some of its indigenous peoples were perceived as nation-to-nation, some Canadians view Canada’s Aboriginal peoples as “unique – a status as Citizens Plus,” arguing “that Aboriginal peoples have all the rights of other Canadians plus additional rights that derive from treaties and their historical status as First Peoples who inhabited the country prior to European arrival.” Aside from so-called ‘privileged access’ to land, non-indigenous peoples often perceive indigenous peoples as having ‘privileged access’ to education, housing and other opportunities. But, as I have demonstrated above, this stems from their extreme oppression and *lack* of access to most resources.

Ever since the European “Age of Discovery” and the era of colonialism and imperialism, anthropologists, including Boas and Malinowski, and many others, have argued that indigenous peoples are doomed to extinction, either through physical extermination or cultural assimilation. Albert (1997: 53) refers to this as “a recurring blind prophecy.” In fact, Albert (1997: 53) argues, indigenous people “are increasingly becoming subjects of their own history,” largely through “the worldwide emergence of indigenous political movements and related support NGOs.”

Although indigenous peoples throughout the world remain among the most impoverished and powerless people in the world, a political movement for the recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples has been building in recent decades. Especially in the post-WW II period, with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other instruments of the United Nations,

“human rights” became an important discourse in the West (Niezen 2000: 26-27).

Significantly, since the 1960s, others have argued that the notion of “human rights” in the West was restricted to, largely, white men. The civil rights movement (especially in the United States); the anti-colonial and pro-independence movements in the Rest (the non-West); the American Indian Movement and Red Power movements in North America; the so-called second wave of the women’s movement; and the gay and lesbian movement, all attempted to include themselves under the expanding human rights “umbrella.”

Indigenous peoples throughout the world increasingly added their voices and demands to have themselves included under the human rights umbrella. This includes both the recognition that indigenous people are human beings and that they therefore have the same “human rights” as all other human beings; but there is an additional factor: “They emphasize that they are *peoples*. That is, indigeness is not simply a characteristic of particular citizens: such as being female, or under age eighteen, or a supporter of labour rights. Rather, indigenous identity posits an alternative citizenship arrangement – that of belonging to an indigenous group – which precedes, and often pre-dates, citizenship in the modern nation-state” (McNeish and Eversole 2005b: 101). “The term ‘indigenous peoples’...implies sovereignty: that as peoples, they can be the direct subjects of international law without the intermediation of nation-states’ (McNeish and Eversole 2005b: 101-102).

This is why the distinction between the singular (‘indigenous people’) and the plural (‘indigenous peoples’) is so important and crucial from the perspective of indigenous peoples and in their fight for their rights as a *special* kind of human beings, with *communal* or *collective* rights as well as individual human rights (McNeish and Eversole 2005b: 102-103).

“Nevertheless, most indigenous groups do not aim to separate themselves from state membership or state authority. Few aim to secede from nation-states. Rather...the goal is most often characterized as self-determination – self-determination that is carried out *within* the border of existing nation-states” (McNeish and Eversole 2005b: 102). In this context, self-determination may include: the right to speak their own language; the right to educate and socialize future generation into their distinct culture; taking more control over their own governing institutions and decision-making processes; a guaranteed right to land; the right to determine their own futures; and some degree of *autonomy* within the nation-state (McNeish and Eversole 2005b: 102).

While there had earlier been isolated attempts by indigenous peoples in various parts of the world to get their rights recognized, by the 1980s and 1990s, these attempts blossomed into an international movement that demanded political recognition. Indigenous peoples came to recognize that, despite the vast differences in their geographic locations, they shared certain characteristics that marked them as ‘different’ from non-indigenous populations.

“The indigenous peoples’ movement has arisen out of the shared experience of marginalized groups facing the negative impacts of resource extraction and economic modernization” (Niezen 2000: 120-121). “Indigenous representatives are taking their complaints to international forums, striving to be involved at the highest level possible in international politics” (Niezen 2000: 121). Niezen (2000: 122) believes that “indigenous organizations have the potential to be highly effective in limiting the tendencies of states to homogenize language, education, justice, and other institutional arrangements.”

The United Nations created a Working Group on Indigenous Populations (WGIP) in 1982, whose crowning achievement was the preparation of a draft Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (Lutz and Yukna 2004: 23). The UN declared 1993 as the International Year of the World's Indigenous People (Lutz and Yukna 2004: 24). The UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED, the Earth Summit), held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 was an important development for indigenous peoples in their relationship with the UN: the conference recognized that indigenous people and their communities have a vital role in environmental management because of their knowledge and traditional practices (Lutz and Yukna 2004: 25). Indigenous people met in one of the largest gatherings of its kind at the NGO Forum, coinciding with the Earth Summit in Rio (Lutz and Yukna 2004: 25). The UN General Assembly proclaimed 1995-2004 the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People: the goal of the Decade "was to strengthen international cooperation for the solution of problems faced by indigenous people in such areas as human rights, the environment, education and health" (Lutz and Yukna 2004: 25). A central objective of the Decade is "the promotion and protection of the rights of indigenous people and their empowerment to make choices which enable them to retain their cultural identity while participating in political, economic, and social life, with full respect for their cultural values, languages, traditions and forms of social integration" (quoted by Lutz and Yukna 2004: 25). The UN designated August 9 to be observed as International Day of the World's Indigenous People every year during the International Decade (Lutz and Yukna 2004: 25).

With an overwhelming majority of 143 votes in favour, and only 4 negative votes cast (Canada, Australia, New Zealand, United States) and 11 abstentions, the United Nations General Assembly (GA) adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples on September 13,

2007. The Declaration has been negotiated through more than 20 years between nation-states and Indigenous Peoples. However, this Declaration is mainly symbolically important for indigenous peoples; there is nothing (except for embarrassment and shaming) to enforce or to implement the noble aims and goals of the Declaration.

In fact, following September 11, 2001, and America's new "war on terror," earlier progress on advocating on behalf of indigenous peoples' rights *may* be regressing as nation-states can now claim that indigenous groups, especially those advocating "autonomy" and "self-determination," are relabeled as "terrorists."

Chapter Three – A Brief History of Taiwan’s Indigenous Peoples.

The island that is today known as Taiwan was inhabited by indigenous peoples prior to sustained contact with outsiders. Those indigenous peoples were Austronesian-speakers, related to the other Austronesian-speaking peoples of Asia and the Pacific (Simon 2005: 54)².

Obviously, this historical information is necessary to situate the Taroko in today’s Taiwan.

The earliest known contacts with European outsiders began with Portuguese, Spanish and Dutch visitors in the 16th and 17th centuries (Davison 2003: 10). The earliest known contacts with outsiders from mainland Asia (what it now the Peoples’ Republic of China) probably began in the 17th century, with scattered visits to the island. The Dutch attempted to colonize the island, creating settlements in the low-lying areas, beginning in the south and moving northwards. This began the process of the gradual displacement and dispossession of the indigenous inhabitants of the plains, some of whom were the victims of Dutch violence and brutal massacres. There was resistance and violent confrontations between the indigenous inhabitants and the Dutch; the most famous being the Great Matou Resistance of 1635 in which the indigenous inhabitants rebelled against the Dutch authorities. During the Dutch colonial period, hundreds of thousands of indigenous Taiwanese were slaughtered: the population of plains indigenes was reduced in half, from approximately 600,000 to 300,000 by the late 1630s (Davison 2003: 10).

During this time, increasing numbers of people from the Asian mainland (Han Chinese, mainly the Holo and Hakka people) were settling on Taiwan, mainly to escape the lack of food and

² It is difficult to decide on the proper romanization for Chinese names and words. In Taiwan research, the norm has been the Wade-Giles system; in the Peoples’ Republic of China, the norm is Hanyu pinyin. I have decided to consistently use the Wade-Giles system in this thesis.

local wars on the mainland. There were also pirates on the high seas seeking to plunder ships in the area. The Ming dynasty (Han Chinese) on the mainland sought to form an alliance with the Cheng family (Koxinga 國姓爺) that controlled trade and business between the island and the mainland. With increasing migration from the mainland, the Cheng family eventually overran the Dutch and they were forced to leave the island (Chen and Reisman 1972:609).

Cheng family rule on Taiwan lasted from 1662 to 1684. Their forces occupied the western plains of Taiwan and a small part of the mountainous area. The Ch'ing dynasty (Man people, originally from Manchuria³), after defeating the Ming dynasty on the mainland, also gained control of areas of Taiwan as well. Although the Ch'ing dynasty gained control on the mainland, they were still numerically a minority compared to the Han population. In 1683, there was a ban put on any further Han migration to Taiwan (Yen and Yang 2004: 117). In 1711, the Ch'ing regime allowed Han migration; they could settle and cultivate land as long as it was not indigenous territory; in 1724, the regime allowed Han to rent indigenous land; and in 1788 Han could legally own indigenous land (Yen and Yang 2004: 117).

After an incident in which Japanese fishermen sought refuge and were killed on Taiwan by some indigenous Taiwanese, the Japanese asked for compensation from the Ch'ing on Taiwan; but the Ch'ing argued that they were not responsible for compensation resulting from the actions of the indigenous people of Taiwan (Chen and Reisman 1972:609). In response, the Japanese attacked the southern coast of Taiwan in 1871, partly in retaliation and partly to increase their control over the area; this incident has become known as the Mutan Incident (Nokan and Yu 2002: 158-160; <http://www.taiwanus.net/history/>). After this incident, the

³ The Man people were a "non-Han ethnic groups who inhabited Manchuria" (Cooper 2003:34)

Ch'ing attempted to increase their control over the inhabitants of Taiwan, both the indigenous inhabitants as well as the majority Han Chinese. The Ch'ing dynasty made Taiwan an official province of the Ch'ing regime in 1887 (Chen and Reisman 1972: 609). Increasing numbers of Man were put into official administrative control on Taiwan and they attempted to 'modernize' the inhabitants of the island. They set up schools and other institutions, and increasing numbers of indigenous peoples on Taiwan became assimilated into Han Chinese society and culture.

From the perspective of the Ch'ing dynasty, the indigenous peoples of Taiwan were either *Sheng-fan* 生番 (raw barbarians; those living in the mountains and still beyond the effective control and influence of the Han) or *Shou-fan* 熟番 (cooked barbarians, those living in the plains and foothills and under effective Han control and influence) (Rubinstein 1999: 110; Simon 2005: 56). As the Ch'ing dynasty consolidated their power over the plains and struggled to enter the mountainous areas in the late 19th century, the terms "plains tribes" (Mandarin: *p'ing-pu-tsu* 平埔族) and "high mountain tribes (Mandarin: *Ka-shan-tsu* 高山族) were used interchangeably with the terms "cooked" and "raw" (Teng 2004: 125-127; cited at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taiwanese_aborigines)

In 1874, the Ch'ing dynasty sent Shen Pao-chen to Taiwan as governor. He began an aggressive pacification, sinicization, and modernization programs aimed at transforming the economic, cultural and social institutions and practices of the indigenous Taiwanese (sinicization here means assimilation into Han culture and society). Some indigenous

Taiwanese (the Atayals, including the present-day Taroko) resented this intrusion into their lives and attempts at assimilating them into Han culture.

As a result of the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895 the Ch'ing dynasty ceded the island of Taiwan to Japan in 1895, as required by the Treaty of Shimonoseki (Chen and Reisman 1972:10). Japan, as it expanded its sphere of influence in Asia, was eager to build up Taiwan as a source of rice and sugar, items grown largely in the plains, as well as access to camphor, timber, and medicines made from animal parts, items found largely in the mountains (Cooper 2003: 39; Ka 1995: 54-57).

The Japanese viewed the Taiwanese indigenous peoples as an inferior species, less than fully human. They mistreated the indigenous peoples, requiring them to engage in forced labour and forcibly attempting to pacify and assimilate them. In 1895 the Japanese colonial administration enacted a law that stated that Japanese laws did not apply to indigenous peoples and indigenous peoples could not use Japanese laws on their own behalf and for their own benefit. In 1900 another law denied the right of indigenous peoples to own land (since they were not regarded as human beings) (Yen and Yang 2004: 182-187).

The Japanese administration forced indigenous peoples to relocate because of their need for camphor and timber in the mountains of Taiwan (Yen and Yang 2004: 48). In addition, the Japanese forced the relocation of many indigenous Taiwanese in order to destroy their solidarity, break up their kin groups and communities and to weaken their opposition to Japanese control (Mowna 1998: 4-5). For the indigenous peoples of Taiwan, loss of their land caused a profound change in their culture and society; perhaps beginning its destruction. The Taiwanese greatly opposed and resented the Japanese occupation of their homelands. At the

same time, the Japanese created a system of Reserve Lands where indigenous peoples could live (Yen and Yang 2004: 235).

“During the Japanese colonial period (1895-1945), in order to take control of the island’s forests, as well as mineral and other natural resources, the Japanese limited indigenous people to ‘mountain reservations’, cutting their traditional territory of 2 million hectares down to 24,000 hectares” (Simon 2005: 57). Resistance from the indigenous peoples was met with violent retaliatory expeditions by the Japanese forces (Simon 2005: 57). The Japanese set up electric fences (Japanese: *Ai-yū-sen* 隘勇線), to both prevent Han Chinese from entering the land of the indigenous Taiwanese and to prevent the indigenous Taiwanese from leaving their land (Pan 2001: 21; Li et.al. 1963: 184).

The Japanese introduced alcohol to Taiwan’s indigenous peoples. “From the 1870s, the forward agents of Japanese southward expansion had recorded numerous instances of participation in alcohol-centered exchanges in Taiwan’s interior. Some of these encounters ended in violence or were occasions for treachery” (Barclay 2003:78). However, “sharing cups and providing gifts of distilled spirits were activities integral to the conduct of trade and diplomacy” (Barclay 2003: 78). According to Barclay, ethnologist Joest “wrote in a remark typical of the era, the Taiwan Aborigines had ‘the custom of establishing the bond of friendship by drinking.’ Joest himself reportedly gained ‘confidence and friendship’ by partaking of locally brewed millet wine... Indeed, in the first decade of formal political rule following the annexation of Taiwan in 1895, Japanese officials systematically feasted Taiwan Aborigines with liquor to secure allegiance to the colonial government” (Barclay 2003: 78).

Although the plains indigenous peoples may have been pacified by 1915 (Ka 1995: 54-55), the indigenous Taiwanese in the mountains resisted until much later. The Japanese encountered opposition from many indigenous Taiwanese, but they encountered the fiercest opposition from the Atayal people (which includes today's Taroko). There were frequent armed confrontations between the Japanese and the Taroko, including the Hsin-cheng Incident of December 1896; the Shan-chan Incident of October 1, 1897; the Jia-wan Incident of 1897; and the Wei-li Incident of July 31, 1906 (<<http://www.tipp.org.tw/jsp/site/0120-1.jsp>>).

The intense resistance from the Taroko was a constant problem for the colonial administration. When an official changed policy and allowed the expansion of the camphor business into what were until then remote mountainous areas, the Taroko people responded with a fight. On August 1, 1906, the Taroko organized an attack on the Japanese authorities and more than thirty officials in the colonial administration were killed. In 1910 a "Five Year Plan to Subdue the Barbarians," aimed especially at the Taroko, was implemented. In 1914, the Japanese attacked the Taroko, bringing in 20,000 troops equipped with the most advanced weapons of the time to confront 3,000 young Taroko warriors who were well-acquainted with their mountainous terrain. In 75 days, the Taroko were almost decimated (<<http://www.tipp.org.tw/jsp/site/0120-1.jsp>>).

In what is now known as the Wushe Incident, a group of over three hundred Tayal warriors attacked the Japanese who had gathered at a sports event in Wushe...on 27 October 1930, killing 130 people. It took Japanese forces two months, and the deaths of 216 aboriginal people, to completely quell the following uprisings. In an event that still remains a part of Tayal collective memory today, the Japanese hired Amis aboriginal militia to behead 101 people and return them to the Japanese for bounty payments. Tayal people still discuss this incident. (Simon 2005: 57)

In addition, under the Japanese occupation, in an attempt to assimilate the indigenous peoples, education was in the Japanese language, indigenous people were encouraged to adopt Japanese names, and all official business had to be conducted in the Japanese language (Simon 2005: 57). Other languages were either banned outright or discouraged, and various cultural practices of the indigenous Taiwanese, such as face tattooing and weaving were banned (Tian 2005; Simon 2005: 62). In the *Kominka* (Japanese:皇民化) campaigns of the 1930s, the Japanese attempted to get everyone on Taiwan to become, devoted followers of imperial Japan (Ching 2001: 6; Nokan and Yu 2002: 165). “Japanese rule all but obliterated lingering Taiwanese ties with China” (Chen and Reisman 1972: 611).

At the end of World War Two, after the Japanese defeat and surrender, the Allied Powers forced Japan to give up the island of Taiwan (Chen and Reisman 1972: 610-611). The allied force gave Taiwan to Chiang Kai-shek. At the same time, “At the conclusion of World War II, the Supreme Commander of the Allied Command in the Pacific, General Douglas MacArthur, authorized the Nationalist Chinese authorities to accept the surrender of Formosa [Taiwan] from the Japanese and to undertake temporarily military occupation of the island as a trustee on behalf of the Allied Powers” (Chen and Reisman 1972: 611). Nationalist Chinese occupation of Taiwan took place without the consent of the Taiwanese (Manthorpe 2003: 188-189; Kerr 1965: 25-27).

Chinese occupation proved unfortunate; maladministration, corruption, atrocities, and deprivations of human rights ensued. Formosan rage exploded on February 28, 1947, in an island-wide popular uprising, after the Chinese police killed a Formosan woman for selling untaxed cigarettes. In suppressing the “2-28 Incident,” as the event is remembered by Formosans, as many as 20,000 Formosan leaders from all walks of life were seized, tortured and then brutally massacred in March 1947 by the occupation forces and reinforcements from the Chinese mainland sent by Chiang Kai-shek. (Chen and Reisman 1972: 612)

The military successes of Mao Tse-Tung forced Chiang Kai-shek and his Nationalist forces (the Kuomintang or KMT) to retreat, and the People's Republic of China was established in 1949. In 1952, the San Francisco Peace Treaty and the Taipei Peace Treaty came into effect, transferring sovereignty of Taiwan to the Republic of China.

The Nationalist rule on Taiwan continued the oppression of the indigenous Taiwanese and intensified attempts at assimilating or "modernizing" them (Simon 2005: 58). Mandarin Chinese was declared the official language and other languages were forbidden or discouraged (Corcuff 1981: 174; Gates 1981: 263). "Indigenous peoples were required to take Chinese names, and learn Chinese in school" (Simon 2005: 58).

The Chinese relocated indigenous communities, as the Japanese had done before them, for national parks and for various administrative and social control purposes (Simon 2005: 58). The best lands were taken by the government or given by them to Chinese capitalists (Simon 2005: 58). "The government nationalized traditional territories, hunting grounds and ritual sites, and forbade the traditional activities of hunting, fishing and slash-and-burn agriculture" (Simon 2005: 58). Remaining indigenous lands were beginning to be registered by the Chinese as Aboriginal Reserve Land, on which the indigenous people received usufruct rights rather than legal ownership (Simon 2005: 58).

Even usufruct rights were only granted under conditions imposed by the Chinese; this "forced the indigenous people to assimilate Chinese patterns of settled cultivation, primarily for cash crops" (Simon 2005: 58). "Aboriginal land could not be sold or rented to outsiders. It had to be

either cultivated or ceded to the government as state property”; in the latter case, such land often was taken over by outside economic interests (Simon 2005: 58).

On Taiwan at this time, four ethnic groups or populations were being recognized: the Nationalists who came to Taiwan after WW II, known as “Mainlanders”; and the largely Han Chinese who came to Taiwan ever since the 17th century and their descendants, known as “native Taiwanese” (Hakka and Holo). At this time, the native Taiwanese comprised approximately 85 % of the island’s total population and the Mainlanders comprised approximately 13 % of the island’s total population (Corcuff 2002: 163). The indigenous peoples of Taiwan, composing the remaining 2% of the population on Taiwan were known at this time as *Shan-pao* 山胞 or *Shan-ti-ren* 山地人 (both meaning compatriates from the mountains) and were barely recognized as a meaningful group (the term “Indigenous peoples” of Taiwan was not officially used until the 1994 Constitution) (Corcuff 2002: 163; Stainton 1999: 42).

Chiang Kai-shek ruled the Republic of China (R.O.C.) as a military dictator, under martial law from 1947 to 1987, and heavily dependent on aid from, and protection by, the United States. With a combination of government intervention and provision of various services, a robust “capitalist” economy was built, largely on the export of cheap “made in Taiwan” products. Taiwan became one of the “Asian Tigers” or “Asian Dragons”, bustling economies based on cheap labour. The flourishing economic “miracle”(Cooper 2003:165) was actually woven through years of ethnic strife and competition. “Although Taiwan has long been touted as an economic ‘miracle’ to be emulated by other countries..., even the existence of the island

nation's indigenous peoples, not to mention the disastrous effect of development on their communities, is still little known outside of Taiwan" (Simon 2005: 53-54).

The Taiwanese indigenous philosopher Sun Ta-chuan refers to indigenous peoples in Taiwan as "sunset groups," cultures that are perhaps "fading away" after a long period of colonial conquest, dispossession and assimilation (Sun 1989: 27, 118). However, as with so many others who prematurely feared the demise of indigenous cultures throughout the world, indigenous peoples worldwide, including in Taiwan, have proven themselves as survivors.

In the 1970s, following America's "ping-pong diplomacy," the United States recognized the government of the Peoples' Republic of China. The United Nations also did so. This relegated Taiwan as a minor, or non-, actor on the world stage. In 1973, Taiwan broke off diplomatic ties with the United States (Iwan 2005: 27).

Indigenous peoples started publishing their own magazines beginning in the 1980s, including *Gao-shan-Ch'ing* 高山青 in 1983, *Shan-wai-shan* 山外山 in 1985, and *Yuan-Chu-min Hui-k'an* 原住民會刊 in 1985 (Iwan 2005: 45). In addition to issuing publications, they also held conferences and street protests (Iwan 2005: 30-33). In 1984, the Taiwan Indigenous Rights Advocacy Association was established and officially claimed the legal term *Yuan-chu-min* (or original inhabitants) for their identity⁴.

Taiwan's indigenous peoples joined the international indigenous peoples' rights movement in terms of demanding collective or communal rights (such as the right to self-determination and

⁴ This concept was introduced to Taiwan's indigenous peoples from Canada by Mohawk activist Donna Loft during the Presbyterian Church's training (Simon 2007c: 12-13).

the right to land) as well as individual rights. “By adopting the identity of *yuan-chu-min*...they had positioned themselves as colonized peoples with internationally recognized rights to property and possessions, cultural practices and knowledge” (Simon 2005: 60). They became part of the international indigenous peoples’ rights movement discussed in Chapter Two.

The Name Correction Movement (1984 and 1992), the Save the Young Aboriginal Women in Prostitution (1988), the Recover Our Aboriginal Name System (1987), Get Nuclear Waste Out of Lan-yu (1988 and 1993), the Return Our Lands Movement (1988, 1989), Anti-Wu-Feng Myth (1985; 1987), Movement Against Establishment of State Parks in Aboriginal Lands (1993) are all examples of this political activism on the part of indigenous peoples on Taiwan at this time (Alliance of Taiwan Aborigines to the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations 1993: 5-7; Roy 2003: 223).

Martial law and military dictatorship were not ended until 1987. The Kuomintang party continued in power until the elections in 2000 in which the Democratic Progressive Party came to power (with Chen Shui-Bian as president). The DPP was the first officially recognized political party other than the KMT since 1945. After this, both indigenous Taiwanese and Native Taiwanese could participate more openly in political struggle and for recognition of their different statuses.

In 1994, Taiwan declared August 1st as the “Day of Indigenous Peoples”; indigenous peoples were also specifically recognized in the 1994 Constitution. In 1996 the Council of Indigenous Peoples was established; in 1998 the Taiwan Indigenous Rights Advocacy Movement published the “Declaration of a New Constitution of Indigenous Self-Determination in Taiwan”; and in 1999 the Indigenous Self-Determination Association was established (Iwan

2005: 30). The DPP Presidential candidate Chen Shui-Bian promised indigenous peoples that “Taiwan’s relationship with its indigenous peoples should be a “quasi-nation to nation relation”⁵ (Simon 2006: 253).

The Republic of China states that the welfare of Taiwan’s indigenous peoples is among its top priorities. Several new government organizations to serve the aboriginal population were created in recent years. On March 16, the Taipei City Government established its Indigenous Peoples Commission. On December 10 of the same year, a cabinet-level Council of Indigenous Peoples was established under the Executive Yuan. In 1997, the Kaohsiung City Government also set up a Commission of Indigenous Affairs (<<http://english.www.gov.tw/Yearbook/index>>). On January 21, 2005 the government passed the Basic Law on Indigenous Peoples (Simon 2007a: 2).

Of course, the R.O.C. government, as with most governments in the world, did not necessarily implement real change for the betterment of their indigenous peoples; there is also the rhetoric of rights and the *realpolitik* of United Nations and other international organizations, instruments and discourses. Since the 1970s, the R.O.C. government has had a hard time gaining any international support and has been struggling to seek international recognition as an independent and sovereign nation-state.

By the 1980s and 1990s, the indigenous peoples’ rights movement is one of the few means through which Taiwan (if not its government) can participate in international fora such as the United Nations (an example is the Alliance of Taiwan Aborigines to the United Nations

⁵ The notion of indigenous people as a “nation” was introduced to Taiwan from Canada, where indigenous peoples are recognized as Canada’s “First Nations.” Simon (2007a: 3) also notes that the Taroko now use “Taroko Nation” in their English-language materials.

Working Group on Indigenous Populations). Various indigenous groups from Taiwan were able to get into United Nations affairs as NGOs and various Taiwanese indigenous activists have been invited to the UN every year since 1988⁶ (<<http://aipp.womenweb.org.tw/>>). “Since 1991...[some] indigenous groups have been the only Taiwanese NGOs to be recognized by the United Nations, a status that gives indigenous interests in Taiwan significant clout” (Simon 2005: 60). In 2000, the DPP issued a “White Paper on Indigenous Rights,” in which they noted “Amidst Taiwan’s struggle between unification and independence, we must establish a relationship of common destiny with the indigenous peoples. The promotion and declaration of sovereignty is the only way to declare Taiwan’s national status to international society” (quoted in Simon 2006: 258).

In summary, Taiwan’s indigenous peoples seem to typify the more general outline of the plight of indigenous peoples throughout the world as presented in Chapter Two in terms of a history of conquest, dispossession, and the other factors discussed in that chapter. In addition, the present attempts in Taiwan for some degree of self-determination or autonomy for its indigenous peoples parallels, and in fact is part of, the larger international indigenous peoples’ rights movement, also discussed at the end of Chapter Two. As Simon (2005: 54) notes: “Like indigenous communities around the world, the *yuan-chu-min* of Taiwan have long been excluded from the fruits of development.”

⁶ Taiwan’s indigenous activists “register under the names of foreign NGOs due to Chinese protests” (Simon 2007: personal communication).

Chapter Four – The Taroko: Ethnographic and Sociological Background

Taiwan's indigenous peoples clearly fit the definitions and mirror the histories and situations of indigenous peoples throughout the world, as discussed in Chapter Two. This chapter examines the existing ethnographic and sociological literatures on the Taroko, in order to address issues of drinking, violence, and aspects of women's status among the Taroko.

As discussed in Chapter Three, the Taiwanese indigenous peoples living on the plains have been effectively transformed and largely assimilated (sinicized) into Han culture and society. In fact, Brown argues that they have adopted a Han identity (Brown 2004: 124).

However, the indigenous peoples living in the more mountainous areas of Taiwan have not been as assimilated. They resisted pacification and attempts to assimilate (sinicize) them into Han culture and society. "Throughout the waves of Han Chinese immigration to Taiwan from the seventeenth to the late nineteenth centuries, the Tayal remained largely in charge of their own territories... The non-assimilated aborigines maintained control of their own territories, and Han Chinese were forbidden to settle in their regions" (Simon 2005: 56). The Tayal were also avoided because they were feared as warriors and headhunters (Simon 2005: 56).

Prior to their gradual transformation by Chinese and Japanese immigrants to Taiwan, the Atayal were hunters and swidden cultivators and "they ruled over vast hunting lands" (Simon 2005: 56). The Atayal had "a complex system of property rights" (Simon 2005: 56). In fact, the Atayal "think *property is life*" (Mowna 1998: 183 quoted by Simon 2005: 56; emphasis added by Simon).

the Tayal lived in close-knit communities regulated by strong religious beliefs. They believed that all of nature belonged to the omnipresent spirit *rutux*. The universe was structured according to a moral order called *gaga*⁷. Any violations of the moral order were perceived to bring misfortune upon both individuals and the entire community. Individuals who violated *gaga*, for example, would fail to catch wild boars while hunting, would fall easily on dangerous mountain slopes, and would be bitten more easily by mosquitoes. Major violations of *gaga*, including the breaking of sexual taboos, required certain rituals to restore order. (Simon 2005: 56)

The moral code, or *gaya*, was “extremely important for maintaining social equilibrium” (Simon 2007b: 6). *Gaya* also “referred to the ritual group responsible for the moral behavior of its members” (Simon 2007b: 6). *Gaya* regulated appropriate interpersonal relations, such as the relationships between unmarried people, between married people, between living people and the ancestors, and between people and the environment (Mowna 1998: 55; Nokan and Yu 2002: 7).

Gaya was maintained through *ludan* and other important elders in a community. A *ludan* is an older person who knows *gaya* well, is fair in judgment, good at speaking, and has an enthusiastic attitude to help his community. Only an adult man can qualify for this title. *Ludan* are responsible for solving conflicts and teaching moral principles (Mowna 1998: 40).

The local, or territorial, group was the *alang*. Several families cooperated in slash-and-burn agriculture, hunting, ritual, weaving, house construction, and in other social activities (Simon 2007b: 4-5). Although generally egalitarian and acephalous, there were important social distinctions based on gender, age, ability and personal charisma (Simon 2007b: 6). Taroko culture has been described as both patrilineal and patriarchal (Simon 2003: 176). Marriage has

⁷ *Gaya* in the Taroko language is the same as *gaga* in the Atayal language.

been described as “buying a wife” and prestations at marriage have been described as “bride-price”; women in Taroko society were thus “disempowered” (Simon 2003: 176).

Property rights among the Atayal “were divided into public property owned collectively by the tribe and private property belonging to families and individuals” (Simon 2005: 56). Communal property “included hunting grounds, mountains, forests, waters, uncultivated lands, lands abandoned by the deceased, tribal pathways, animals and fish that lived within those territories, and other mountain products such as bees and honey” (Simon 2005: 56). Individually owned property included “cultivated land, agricultural products and tools, bamboo groves, and private pathways” (Simon 2005: 56).

Property, for the Atayal, “was considered to carry the souls of the ancestors and represented hope for future generations, the protection of property rights was regulated by the moral order of *gaga*” (Simon 2005: 56). If property was transferred from one owner to another (individual or communal), religious rituals were performed (Simon 2005: 57).

The basic division of labour by gender was that men prepared new gardens in the slash-and-burn cycle and women tended and harvested the crops; men hunted; women wove. “Once young women learned to weave and young men learned to hunt, they were given tattoos on their faces,” tattoos, it was believed, which allowed them to enter their version of ‘heaven’ after death (Simon 2005: 62).

With Japanese rule over Taiwan, changes occurred that led to a process of “cultural loss” and “the end of Tayal control over their own territory” (Simon 2005: 57). Simon argues that, with the various changes brought about under Japanese rule, changes which affected new property

rights and new forms of social control, “violation[s] of sacred *gaga*” occurred (Simon 2005: 57).

According to Simon (2005: 57), “The Tayal tribe was the last tribe to be brought under Japanese domination.” In one incident mentioned by Simon (2005: 57): “In the ‘Five-year Expedition’ of 1910-14, over ten thousand Tayal people were killed.”

The Japanese took a lot of Atayal/Taroko land and designated it as state-owned forests, they “forcibly relocated the Taroko to what is now Hsiulin Township at the foothills of the mountains” and much of their original territory is now Taroko National Park (Simon 2005: 57).

After the Nationalists took over the governing of Taiwan, one KMT-related corporation established in the area of the Taroko in the 1950s was Asia Cement (Simon 2005: 59).

“Township officials encouraged Taroko farmers to rent their land, promising that Asia Cement would provide local employment, prevent the migration of young people to the cities, and bring economic development to the community” (Simon 2005: 59). Although they were promised that their land would be rented for only 20 years, they were not told “that cement mining and production would render their land unfit for agriculture” (Simon 2005: 59). While the Taroko thought that the leases would end, they were told that the leases were in perpetuity; at that time Taiwan was still under martial law and protests were impossible; now they have begun (Simon 2005: 59). Simon (2005: 59-61) details this struggle, and notes that, although the struggle was not yet over, in 2000 “the Taroko people were able to enter their lands for the first time in twenty-seven years.

They celebrated the event with a traditional ceremony in commemoration of their ancestors.”

Most of Taiwan’s indigenous peoples have been converted to Christianity. Stainton (2002: 15) notes that a 1998 survey indicated that 38% of Taiwan’s indigenous households are Presbyterian and 26 % are Catholic; for the Tayal people alone, the figures are 57.5% Presbyterian and 26.3% Catholic (Stainton does not indicate any thing about the remaining households).

Today, in addition to the categories of Mainlanders and Native Taiwanese, the descendants of those mountain indigenous peoples are recognized as a distinct and separate category, Taiwan’s indigenous peoples. Those are the people discussed at the end of Chapter Three, who are now demanding rights as human beings and as indigenous peoples. However, although the Taiwan Government might be actively promoting its indigenous peoples in international fora, the non-indigenous peoples of Taiwan still hold very negative views of Taiwan’s indigenous peoples. This negative image is the product of a long history of discrimination against indigenous peoples and the product of ethnic competition and strife (Fu 1996: 153). Many non-indigenous Taiwanese view indigenous peoples as lazy and poor (Fu 1996: 151).

Simon (2003: 180) reports that indigenous peoples continue to face racism in business even in contemporary Taiwan. However, as mentioned earlier in Chapter Two, the relationship between economic status and “laziness,” as well as the relationship between economic status, “laziness” and alcohol, has to be examined more closely.

All data supports the view that, as with indigenous peoples throughout the world, in general, as discussed in Chapter Two, Taiwan's indigenous peoples today are at the bottom of almost all social indicators of well-being: income, employment rates, health, education, infant mortality rates, longevity, and others.

Employment and unemployment rates, as well as income, do not portray an adequate picture of the position of indigenous peoples *vis-à-vis* non-indigenous peoples in Taiwan, because subsistence farming, hunting and gathering, and other non-remunerated activities are not included as employment and are not included as income in official statistics. In addition, official employment rates only include people who are employed or who are actively looking for employment; those who have "given up" or are chronically unemployed are not included. In addition, indigenous people are sometimes employed in seasonal or temporary jobs, and it is not clear as to whether those are included in the official data. Even then, official statistics indicate that indigenous peoples *still have a slightly higher* unemployment rate and *lower* wage incomes than non-indigenous peoples; in addition, indigenous peoples generally have larger families than non-indigenous people (Council of Indigenous Peoples 2005a: 142).

According to Taiwan's Council of Indigenous Peoples (2007b: 29), close to 60 % of mountain indigenous families live under the poverty line. Indigenous people are twice as likely as the general population to be engaged in agriculture, and income from agriculture is among the lowest of all types of employment (Council of Indigenous Peoples 2007b: 12, 17). Indigenous people are less likely to be employed in non-agricultural employment, where higher wages are found.

The Taroko, compared to the other indigenous peoples of Taiwan, are even less well-off: the Taroko's unemployment rate in 2005 was the 5th highest unemployment rate among the total of twelve indigenous peoples; the Taroko also had the longest period of unemployment, 45.86 weeks per year out of a possible total of 52, much higher than the average of 28.22 weeks per year; and the Taroko had the lowest personal income, second only to the Yami on Orchid Island (Council of Indigenous Peoples 2005a:67).

Although statistics are difficult to interpret, there are some indicators of the relationship between Taiwan's indigenous peoples and non-indigenous peoples. For example, 31 % percentage of the general population, but only 13 % of indigenous people, have achieved a college or above education; and while only 36 % of the general population, 51 % of indigenous people have achieved only a junior high school education or below (Council of Indigenous Peoples 2005a:11).

There are numerous rules and restrictions resulting in the situation in which, although indigenous people can use and even own land, they cannot sell Reserve land to non-indigenous peoples (Simon 2005:55; <<http://law.moj.gov.tw/Scripts/NewsDetail.asp?no=1D0060026>>); in addition, some lands have been taken over for national parks, the Bureau of Forests, and economic enterprises such as the cement factories and mines. Reserve lands allow indigenous peoples to use land for gardens, hunting and other activities, but that land is under government administration and can not be sold (Simon 2005:58).

In Cyakang there are only limited opportunities for employment. Some (especially younger) men and women are away for schooling and some (also mainly younger) men and women are

employed outside of Cyakang in construction, the nearby spa/resort, or hospital; they live in Cyakang and commute to work. Some women run small 'general stores' in Cyakang.

In addition, indigenous peoples in Taiwan are often unaware of opportunities for additional help, such as Taiwan's welfare system. If they are aware of, for example, subsidies available to the disabled and those with low incomes, they are often unable to actually obtain them. The bureaucracy often just ignores or frustrates indigenous peoples who want to make legitimate claims on the state. The Council of Indigenous Peoples (2005a: 68) indicates that 61 % of unemployed indigenous people obtain their economic resources from their family; 28 % from their savings; 14 % from their relatives; and 6 % from the state. Income from the state include government funding, low-income elder subsidies, and unemployment subsidies.

In a survey conducted in 2005 by the Council of Indigenous Peoples (2005a: 19), 52 % of indigenous people do not drink alcohol; 37 % say they drink occasionally, very little, or 'it depends'; 5 % report that they drink once or twice a week; 3 % report that they drink often; and 2 % report that they drink every day. But, of course, self-reporting on behaviours that are negatively regarded by others is probably under-reported.

The Council of Indigenous Peoples (2005b: 36) states that, compared to the general population, indigenous people in Taiwan spend five times more money on alcohol, tobacco and betel nuts; but they don't break down expenditures on the three items. According to Hwu et. al. (1990: 377), life-long alcohol dependency among the Atayal was 11.4 %, showing a growth of almost 100 times since the 1950s. According to Hsia (2007: 24), with the socioeconomic changes that have taken place in the lives of the indigenous peoples of Taiwan, and specifically "With the pressure of earning money, drinking gradually became a way of releasing their life stress."

According to Yang et al. (2006: 25), “Alcohol-drinking has been one of the most common means of trying to cope with the stress that resulted from a general lack of private or public resources.”

A high percentage of indigenous adolescents drink alcohol; research in high schools showed that 35.8 % of indigenous youths drink alcohol and 71.9 % of those who drink state that they have been involved in vehicular speeding (Li and Chang 1999: 237). Yang et. al. (2002: 32) reports that 67.7 % of indigenous women drink; 30.5 % drink every day or several times a week (Yang et al. 2002: 32).

A national health survey by the Council of Indigenous Peoples (2005b: 31) in 1993 reported that indigenous people have 12.8 times more alcohol-related syndromes than the general population; it also reported that they have 3.4 times the rate of chronic liver cirrhosis than the general population and 4 times the accident rate. Ye (1993; cited in Hsia 2007: 13) notes that 23 % of the Atayal population reports alcoholism; 11.6 % report alcohol abuse (either alcohol abuse or alcohol dependence).

Hsu (1991) argues that suicide, violence, and alcohol use and abuse are caused by the inability of some of Taiwan’s indigenous people to ‘adapt’ to the processes of ‘modernization.’ In his view, the Atayal/Tayal (including the Taroko) are the least ‘assimilated’ and therefore they have high rates of suicide, violence, and alcohol use and abuse. Since I was a student of Hsu’s in Taiwan, his views on these matters may have influenced my own. Chang and Cheng (2002: 135, 138), expanding on Hsu’s argument, states:

The Ami settle[d] in the eastern plain area of Taiwan, and were the first among all of Taiwanese native groups to have contact with the Han Chinese and have

undergone assimilation for over a century. In consequence, they are the most assimilated, generally better educated, with a higher proportion of skilled workers than other Taiwanese natives. The Atayal originally live[d] in the central mountains of northern Taiwan. Geographical distance and their aggressive nature considerably delayed their contact with Han Chinese until the 1960s, much later than several of the other groups. The Atayal therefore is one of the least assimilated native groups...A lower extent of acculturation was found to be associated with a significantly higher risk of suicide, especially among the lower acculturated group (Atayal) and in men.

Cheng and Chen (1995: 81; 89), also building on Hsu's argument, state that:

Men in all groups were found to have higher prevalences, a lower mean age at onset, and a longer mean duration...of alcoholism than women...The stress of life is lower among them [the Ami and Paiwan] than among the less acculturated Bunun and Atayal women. These differences in the extent of psychosocial stress and acculturation might account for the higher rates of alcoholism among the latter than among the former groups.

Obviously, for Taiwan's indigenous people, any expenditure on alcohol would be a drain on the limited economic resources which they have. For unemployed indigenous men, any such spending would clearly be a drain on their family's resources as well.

Chapter Five – Women in Cyakang

This chapter provides the ‘meat’ of this thesis: the results of my fieldwork among the Taroko. In addition to a general ethnographic picture of women’s lives in Cyakang village, the emphasis is on in the ‘status of women’ today. While this chapter focuses mainly on negative aspects of Taroko women’s status today, largely in terms of the use and abuse of alcohol and violence, the following chapter also discusses some positive aspects of Taroko women’s status.

Prior to the migrations and conquests discussed in Chapter Three, the Taroko had their ‘traditional’ religion and culture, but much was condemned, banned, and/or transformed during the Chinese and Japanese administrations (tattooing, weaving, prayer, witchcraft, fortune telling). The Japanese in particular attempted to replace old customs with the introduction of Shinto shrines in the villages.

With the ouster of the Japanese and the introduction of the KMT, Christianity started to expand its previously limited influence. The transformation and decline in the importance of *gaya*, is, of course, directly related to the introduction of foreign religions, especially Christianity since the 1940s. Most of the Atayal, including the Taroko, converted to it. Most Cyakang villagers take Christianity as their religion. Villagers explained to me: “God is *utux baraw*” or “spirit above.” Villagers also told me that they adopted the religion quickly, partly because they believe it is close in some ways to their traditional beliefs and practices, especially their moral code *gaya*. Most of the villagers attend a Presbyterian church. Their belief in ancestral spirits were thus altered to believe in one God. Some villagers attend a Catholic church; when they violate social norms (expressed as violating *gaya* and the church), they can confess (but if the violation is serious, even today they will likely slaughter a pig as

well). In Cyakang, people follow and attend the Presbyterian Church, the Catholic Church or the True Jesus Church (with followings from largest to smallest in that order).

People today mention *gaya* frequently, mostly in the context of discussing interpersonal relationships, especially those between men and women. When inappropriate behaviours occur, especially if the infraction or offense is considered serious enough, people will say that a ritual is needed as a public acknowledgement of the wrongdoing and as a sacrifice of atonement. The ritual is also needed in order to avoid the ‘bad luck’ or misfortune that violations of *gaya* produce. Simon (2007: personal communication) notes that, today, the Ten Commandments are called the “Ten *Gaya*” in their Bible.

These rituals, which still occur today, may just involve an offer of a few cigarettes or some betel nuts, but serious infractions most often involve the slaughter of a pig, with the meat distributed throughout the community. In addition, a ritual involving the slaughter a pig and sharing of the meat is also performed at joyful occasions such as marriage and other rites of passage, when ancestors need to be notified of changes in a person’s life.

I observed three such rituals during the three months of my fieldwork in Cyakang. Men kill the pig and cut the meat, but they do not touch the internal organs; these are cleaned and some cooked by the women. Simon (2006: personal communication) interpreted this as part of a larger symbolic distinction: men are involved with the “outside” or public world, whereas women are more involved with the “inside” or domestic world.

At the same time, *gaya*, and the ritual offerings and sacrifices that violations require, is not as important today in Cyakang as it used to be. At the same time, and somewhat ironically, the

occasions for pig killing are probably more numerous today than in the past. (This is related to the fact that, in the past, men might have to go off and hunt a pig; today, domestic pigs are raised in the village.) I was told that the people in Cyakang today might have a pig kill for any of the following: when you get married or divorced; when you move in together prior to marriage; when you move into a new house; when you buy a new vehicle; when you (or your child) pass the college entrance examination; when you get a good new job; or when you experience a frightful dream or nightmare.

Today, such ritual and pig-killing also involves ample amounts of alcohol (to be discussed below). Yet, gaya is no longer followed as closely as in the past.

When I was in Cyakang, a 46 year-old handicapped woman was found alone and dead in her kitchen. She apparently fell and when people found her, she had already been dead for two hours (a friend had tried telephoning her earlier and she was the person who discovered the body). Taroko used to believe that dying alone brings bad luck and a 'witch' was needed to practice a cleansing ritual and also for good luck (or to avoid bad luck) (Mowna 1998: 159).

When I asked the dead woman's sister whether they intended to perform such a ritual, she told me that they don't practice such rituals anymore because they are considered to be 'superstitions.'

Research conducted in 1997 in one Taroko village (not Cyakang) found that at least one-fourth of the married women had had premarital sexual relations, judging from the time between their marriage and the birth of their first child. The villagers did not make such calculations themselves and no ritual was performed (Yu 1998: 42).

In Cyakang today, many occasions that might have been perceived as violations of *gaya*, such as premarital and extramarital sexual relations and second marriages, occur without apparent comment by others. In addition, traditional taboos on men touching weaving equipment and women weaving while men are hunting, have declined both with the decline in women weaving and in men hunting, but also with the decline of the importance of strictly following *gaya* and the requirements for ritual following its violation.

On the other hand, people in Cyakang today often speak about the need for proper behaviour and there is a lot of gossip about improper behaviour. For example, Wumaw, a woman in her early 30s during my fieldwork, told me about the social pressure she was under to continue caring for her mother-in-law at home and the accusations made about her that followed when she placed that mother-in-law in a nursing home; this woman had five children of her own and was caring for her husband's old father as well as the husband's old mother, who had suffered from a stroke and who required a lot of care, and she was the main 'breadwinner' in her household (her husband seldom works and drinks at home every day) and she could barely support the family working as an agricultural day labourer, while also caring for the mother-in-law. She decided that, without the mother-in-law at home to care for, she could obtain additional work as an agricultural day labourer that would allow her to make more money, easily covering the cost of the nursing home.

There is still a fairly rigid gender division of labour in Cyakang. While some men and women are employed outside the home for pay, many men and women still work in their gardens and some men also hunt occasionally. Women are responsible for almost all domestic work, including cleaning, cooking, and childcare. Men cook animals they have killed in the hunt.

Some women run small general stores in the village. Boys and girls, of course, attend school. Women, as in the incident related above, are also responsible for respecting and serving their aging parents-in-law, especially when they are ill.

Our survey of 99 individuals in Cyakang asked people for the major source of their economic resources: 40 individuals work every day; 13 work at temporary or seasonal jobs; 17 work in agriculture (that is, in their own fields); 9 run small shops; 18 rely on government subsidies. (A few responded 'other' or simply did not answer. Respondents could select more than one source, so the total may be greater than 100 %).

In Chapter Four I indicated that the existing literature states that Taiwan's indigenous people are often unaware of or unable to access and to obtain government resources, such as subsidies. One woman in Cyakang told me that she went to the Township Office, located thirty minutes away by motorcycle, on three separate occasions to try to apply for, and obtain, crop subsidies (if indigenous people grow certain crops, such as *shan-su* (Formosa SpLinwort: edible ferns) or organic vegetables, they can obtain government subsidies to purchase fertilizer at a reduced price. The first time, people at the Office told her to come back at another time. The second time they told her that there was no such subsidy. The third time they told her that it is not their responsibility to deal with her application, and they did not indicate where she *should* apply for the subsidy.

Our survey also asked individuals whether the men in the household hunted: none indicated that they hunted 'often'; 37 indicated that they hunted 'sometimes'; 32 indicated that, although they knew how to hunt, they never hunt; 25 indicated that they did not know how to hunt and did not hunt. The survey also asked respondents about whether the women of their household

wove: one indicated 'often'; 18 indicated 'sometimes'; 30 indicated that, although they know how to weave, they never weave; and 43 indicated that they do not know how to weave and never weave.

Women told me that they, the women, experience physical violence at the hands of men. Mostly, they told me about incidents of domestic violence at the hands of their husbands. Although in the past, women might be beaten by their husbands if they didn't carry out their responsibilities as they should, today women also told me that they get beaten when their husbands drink alcohol. Almost every woman I've talked to (about 30 women) has reported their experience of being beaten by their husbands. Some of them related these incidents to me almost like a joke or an old story; some of them described violence as a common thing that happened all the time; and some described violence as a 'mistake' after their husbands drank alcohol. One woman stated that she had been raped by her husband when he was drunk. (More on drinking below.)

I know of only one case in which a woman had reported such violence to the police or other authorities (Simon, and not I, witnessed this case, but he does not know what happened after the police were summoned). People told me that the authorities, including both the police and the churches, viewed such violence as a domestic issue and not one they believe they should deal with. In addition, villagers have little trust in the police. In fact, most of the police (who are all men) are from Cyakang or have relatives in Cyakang, so it would be difficult for them to deal with domestic violence because both spouses could be their relatives by blood or by marriage.

Women told me that their only consolation from violence is their religion: they pray and ask for the situation to improve. Some women mention that they sometimes fought back with their husbands, sometimes they run away from their husbands, but mostly they pray to God that the situation will improve in the future. One woman, a True Jesus Church follower, told me that she used to drink and her husband used to be a heavy drinker and often physically abused her. After a serious car accident while he was drunk, she and her husband both stopped drinking; she attributed this as an answer to her prayers. Religion provides more psychological comfort than actual prevention or protection

While in more traditional times, any such violence would have been seen as a violation of *gaya*, requiring ritual to protect the entire community from harm, today it is merely a personal problem (Li and Hsu 1978).

All three of the churches in Cyakang (Presbyterian, Catholic and True Jesus) discourage people from drinking alcohol and, especially, heavy drinking. This is particularly true of the True Jesus Church, which strictly prohibits the consumption of alcohol. But, although they might discourage drinking, they have a limited affect on actual drinking. At a Catholic Church worship one Sunday, the priest gave a speech, stating that villagers should abstain from drinking alcohol. However, the church kitchen provided chicken soup cooked with rice wine (twelve per cent alcohol) as the main dish for lunch following the church service! People told me that, basically, you should never drink before going to church, but it is okay to drink afterwards. My observations are that women, especially older women, often with children, attend church services much more often than men.

Taroko recognize that certain alcoholic drinks are more suited to, and favoured by, men; and other alcoholic drinks are more suited to, and favoured by, women. Rice wine, Pao-li-ta (a vitamin drink with alcohol context), and hard liquor are for men; Pu-li-K'ang (another vitamin drink with alcohol context) is for women. Both men and women drink beer. While both men and women can and do drink in Cyakang, most people told me that while it is sometimes okay for men to drink large quantities, women should drink more moderately and should never get drunk. In addition, I observed that, in Cyakang, men drink with men and women drink with women. They believe that men can drink hard liquor and not get drunk as easily as women would. When men drink, they tend to drink in successive rounds of "bottoms up" to their drinking partners as a demonstration of courage. Although women sometimes also drink "bottoms up", they tend to enjoy their drinking and talk slowly rather than showing their courage. As in other cultures and societies, it appeared to me that Taroko women drank less, and less often, than men because of their responsibilities for their families. They may also have less money to spend on unnecessary items. In addition, being drunk in public can bring shame to a woman (and, by extension, to her husband and family).

Drinking alcohol seems to be associated with aboriginal identity in Cyakang, especially in situations when they are dealing with non-aborigines. For example, one woman told me: "We aboriginal people are like this, we have a couple of drinks and then we go work really hard." For example, every morning in Cyakang, non-aboriginal businessmen drive their trucks to the village with supplies, such as: meat, betel nuts, snacks, shoes, clothing, and drinks, for the little shops or general stores in the village. If the businessmen have good relations with the villagers, they are often invited to have a drink or two before or after they conduct their business.

Also, drinking is a social opportunity to meet with others in a convivial atmosphere, and is also an opportunity to speak in their own language, “*gali-Truku*.” Both in dealing with non-indigenous Taiwanese such as the businessmen mentioned above, as well as with dealing with most children and younger Taroko, Mandarin is spoken; children, who now attend school, can barely speak a simple sentence in the language of the Taroko.

In addition, alcohol is also sometimes available at various ceremonies and rituals, including weddings, pig-killing ceremonies, memorials, and political feasts. At these events some non-alcoholic beverages are served, but beer and Bu-li-k’ang are also provided by the host; sometimes more is given for guests to take away with them. They may also prepare such dishes as chicken boiled with rice wine. Although some alcohol evaporates with cooking, the dish still contains a potent amount of alcohol.

From my observations in Cyakang, my impression is that some women and men drink alcoholic drinks in the morning prior to going to work, and in the evening after work. One woman told me: “Ribix⁸, we indigenous people are just like this. We love to drink two glasses of alcohol before work. We have to work from the very early morning until the night comes. We are poor. We are just like this.”

Others, it was reported to me, drink at home throughout the day. Men and women drink in the 23 small shops in the village (one includes a karaoke machine and one a restaurant). As mentioned in Chapter One, my impressions are probably coloured by the fact that most of my stay in the village was among the women, and it was the women who both drank and also complained about men’s drinking.

⁸ Ribix is the name that the people in Cyakang bestowed on me.

Drinking in the morning did not appear to affect peoples' abilities to function. In fact, men and women told me that a drink or two of Pu-li-K'ang in the morning gives them the energy they need to put in a day's work due to the high caffeine in this medicinal beverage. Drinking in the evening, however, did occasionally lead to drunkenness. In addition, drinking is sometimes accompanied by belligerent behaviour towards the shop-keepers. And sometimes people drink "on credit," without paying. Shop-keepers (18 out of 23 are women), who are often related by blood or marriage to the offenders, often find it very difficult or impossible to demand and to therefore receive payment. Almost every female shop-keeper in the village told me that they have had a problem with customers who buy on credit. Women told me that they would never ask the police or other authority to intervene in these cases.

I was told by the shop-keeper whose shop has a karaoke machine that drunk customers sometimes damage the song catalogues, which are relatively expensive to replace.

One man told me that, after his son had passed a college entrance examination: "Now my economic pressure has been released." The man who said this, Watan, is one of the men who I believe drinks the most in the village. Every time I saw him drunk, he would tell me this tale: he has four children and a 76 year-old mother and he has been divorced for many years; his mother is a shop-keeper. He used to serve in the military, but was forced to leave because of his excessive drinking. The drinking was also a reason for the divorce. His mother takes care of him and his children when he is drunk. He sings a song: "We indigenes...are poor and happy."

One night I witnessed a woman get beaten by her husband until she lay on the ground in front of my house. The police arrived with an ambulance; they told the husband to go home and the

wife refused to get in the ambulance. Both husband and wife had obviously been drinking.

The next day, as people asked me what had happened the previous night, when I mentioned that someone called the police, people looked at me with expressions that I read as: why bother, this sort of thing happens all the time. After the incident, she told me: "I can't leave him. This is God's will." I saw this same woman get beaten twice more during my fieldwork.

Another woman, Labai, about 30 years-old and a shop-keeper, told me: "He [her husband] slapped me. My hearing was damaged. It doesn't usually happen. He was drunk. But, you know, I was wrong too. I shouldn't have talked back to him."

It is not only wives who sometimes get yelled at or beaten by husbands who drink; I know of at least one occasion during my fieldwork where a drunk man threatened his mother. In interviews, some women stated that they prefer not to have boys, because they fear that sons may grow to be violent.

One woman named Nagi told me: "My husband does nothing but drink at home. He can find every spot where I hide my money. Once, I rolled some paper money and put it into a nail hole in the wall, but he found it and used it on alcohol. If I dare to stop him, I know what will happen [a beating]. All I can do is keep working as much as I can and try to raise my six children."

By one very tentative calculation, I concluded that a person who drinks frequently may spend up to 14 % of his or her income on alcohol.

In addition to the effects of drinking and violent behaviour on men and women, I also observed and was told that children are also victims of alcohol. Children of men (and women)

who drink obviously live in families where resources are 'wasted' on alcohol. I have seen three children (aged 10-12) with very little money with them, wandering in the street; sometimes they talked to me and sometimes they visited me in the home we rented. Sometimes they would refuse to go home. One child had \$15 NTD⁹ (0.50 CAD) for lunch, and another had \$100 NTD (\$3.30 CAD) for the day. Both had parents who drank or gambled at home while their children were out in the street. One parent had a 'decent' job with the state-run Taiwanese Railroad Company, and went to work every day; but he drank after work and on the weekends. My impression from this incident is that I felt very sad for these children; perhaps I overgeneralize from this one incident.

In a telephone interview in the field with the principal of the Cyakang Elementary School. He told me that: "There are about 120 children at...[my] school...About 20 % of the children have difficulty paying for their lunch...Once we notice that some students can't pay lunch fees on time, his or her teacher usually visits the family first; if the family is low income, we help them to apply for a subsidy from the local government. If they aren't, we try to apply for a subsidy from a local business." This principal continued: "Many of the parents do not have a regular job. They are doing construction work. If the weather isn't good, they don't have work and don't get income from work...and sometimes, unfortunately, they drank too much the night before and missed work...Therefore, the children can't always pay for the lunch fee." I thought that the fact that some children had trouble paying for school lunches (about \$20 CAD for a month), while some of their parents spend money on alcohol was especially tragic. Again, perhaps I overgeneralize my feelings from this incident.

⁹ NTD means New Taiwan Dollars. The Canadian equivalent is given at the time of my fieldwork.

In the field, some children stated that drinking alcohol was “not good.” They actually asked Simon and myself why we drank alcohol and inquired whether our partners drank and, if they did, whether they were violent towards us.

Although traditional *gaya* is not strictly followed anymore or has changed with the influence of Christianity, Cyakang villagers follow some of their traditional *gaya*, such as pig killing ceremony. There is still a fairly rigid gender division of labour in Cyakang which extended from *gaya*, men hunting and women weaving.

In a patriarchal society like Taroko, women are constantly facing constraints from the traditional gender expectations in contemporary Cyakang. Many of the shop owners (usually women) in Cyakang work very hard, but seldom recognize themselves as breadwinners.

Although drinking occasions in Cyakang may have some positive effects on providing an opportunity to speak their own language, excessive drinking has brought both a waste of spending and violence. This may be related to: the fading *gaya* has made the misuse of alcohol behaviors a personal issue, rather than an endangering act to the entire community. The new religion has limited power on constraining excessive drinking. Some of the Cyakang women have encountered violence from, most probably, their drunk husbands. Some of the children who have parents with heavy drinking behaviours may be victims from shortage of money to pay for food.

Chapter Six – Women’s Agency and Conclusions

In Chapter One I briefly noted that there is no unitary phenomenon of “*the* status of women” in any particular society or culture. I want to conclude this thesis by discussing some of the more positive aspects of the lives of the Taroko women in Cyakang village. Earlier in this thesis I have stressed the impression that, at least some women in Cyakang are the victims of male violence. But it is equally important to note that (1) this does not apply to most, much less all, women in Cyakang, and (2) no women are ‘merely victims.’ Women throughout the world, including the women in Cyakang, are also agents, influencing and altering the world in which they live. Although it might be correct to label Taroko society and culture, in the past and present, as ‘patriarchal,’ as mentioned in Chapter Four, women are not simply the pawns of men.

As I stated in Chapter One, I was hired as a research assistant by Scott Simon, to join him in Cyakang for the summer of 2006. I was told to focus my research on women and women’s interests and concerns. In fact, I spent most of my time, during which I carried out anthropological fieldwork and “just lived,” among Taroko women.

In talking with the women, visiting them in their homes, sitting in the small village shops, and “just hanging out” in various places in the village, I got the *impression* that the women themselves drank more than I was used to seeing in other cultures (perhaps this does not include Carleton university!). Even more so, I heard about, and saw myself, that some Taroko men seemed to drink a lot, sometimes ending in violence, usually targeted at women.

I also mentioned in Chapter One that dealing with the subject of indigenous people and alcohol is politically sensitive and one must be careful not to give ammunition to racist views that simplistically states that “natives drink,” without any subtlety and without noting that, of

course, non-indigenous people also drink, and some are alcoholics. The same applies to writing about indigenous people and violence.

As mentioned in Chapter Two, it is difficult, and perhaps impossible, to know exactly how much people drink and how often violence results: public drinking and violence may be observable, but private drinking and violence are usually not. I certainly do not have any concrete idea as to exactly how many people in Cyakang, male and female, drink, nor how much they drink; nor do I have any concrete information on the frequency of violence. The impression I received in the field was that drinking, and the violence that it sometimes caused, was a significant phenomenon, but I have no data to support this impression. Even musing that “perhaps 30 people drink on a regular basis” or that “almost every woman I’ve talked to (about 30 women) has reported their experience of being beaten by their husbands,” provides little overall understanding of a village composed of about 2,200 individuals.

Rather than a simplistic ‘blaming the victim,’ Chapter Two argued that drinking is more likely a practice introduced by the colonizers and is partly understood as a response to many years of conquest, dispossession, marginalization, powerlessness, exclusion, cultural loss, and the many other processes discussed in Chapter Two. In fact, as I discussed briefly in Chapter Three, the colonists *did* indeed encourage and participate in the drinking of alcoholic beverages (although the Taroko drank locally-produced wine prior to colonization). Drinking for some may be a means of escaping that reality. This may be the case for the Taroko.

There is some hope that, with the establishment of ‘democratic rule,’ and with Taiwan’s struggle for recognition in the international arena, Taiwan’s indigenous peoples are finally being recognized as such and are joining the international indigenous peoples’ rights

movement, as discussed at the end of Chapter Two. The history of Taiwan's indigenous peoples, including most especially the Taroko, demonstrates a history and a current situation remarkably similar to other indigenous peoples throughout the world.

In this thesis, I have already indicated that women in Cyakang are, in fact, active agents: some women have left Cyakang to pursue their education; some women commute to paid work from Cyakang, some as workers at the spa/resort, some as workers at a nearby hospital, and others to other jobs; some women are shopkeepers; some women attend church; some women are active in Taroko rituals; some women drink themselves; some women pray that men's drinking and violence will cease, some women run away, and some women fight back; some women weave; some women have a role in gardening, tending and harvesting crops; some women gossip; one woman tried to hide her money from her husband; and one woman went to the Township Office to apply for an agricultural subsidy. In this chapter, I discuss some activities that empowering to women.

Shan-su (Asplenium antiquum) is a plant grown in the foothills around Cyakang. (See photos in Appendix IV.) It is considered a delicacy as a food. Sometimes villagers interplant *shan-su* and betel nut palms. Betel nut palms are tall and the *shan-su* plants are short and need to grow in a relatively moist and dark place; villagers often plant *shan-su* under the betel palms, often covered with black nets. In addition, men sometimes collect wild *shan-su* in the hills around Cyakang.

The plant is made into a 'bouquet' by the women (sometimes with help from some men), often working in groups. The bouquets are then sold to the local Farmers' Association, a government organization. A bouquet of *shan-su* can be sold to the Farmers' Association for \$195 NTD (6.50 CAD) (per 600 grams); loose *shan-su* (not made into a bouquet) can be sold to area businessmen for \$90 NTD (3.00 CAD) (per 600 grams). *Shan-su ban* refers to the group of workers who collectively bundle the *shan-su* and make them into bouquets.

The Farmers' Association holds a meeting in Cyakang every month to encourage people to grow and to collect *shan-su*, and to bundle the plants into bouquets for sale. They educate the villagers that there are subsidies available through the government to encourage the development of *shan-su* cultivation and collection and the production of the bouquets. During my fieldwork, the *shan-su* class had about 18 to 28 members. Men and women seem to attend in roughly equal numbers. In fact, all the participants are registered under the name of the men or the women's husbands.

The people of Cyakang have been actively participating in dancing for a couple of years. Every evening, some women gather at the village community centre to dance. Most are older women in their 50s and 60s. Some younger mothers also take their children or babies with them to attend the dance gatherings. During my fieldwork, usually about 15 to 30 people dance and about 20 came as spectators. The spectators are there either just to watch or to take care of children when their mothers are dancing. Any member of the community can participate; some come on a fairly regular basis; others come just once. Sometimes young children, after their dinner, come to watch. Sometimes other adults stop by.

The dancing began because there is now an annual indigenous athletic meeting, sponsored by the Township Office. The Taroko, as a newly recognized indigenous people, are eager to present their distinctive culture through dance. The dance reflects the gender ideology of the Taroko. The dancers imitate the weaving actions of women and the hunting actions of men. The dancers also illustrate how their ancestors cultivated new lands and then worked hard to maintain their lives.

But, in Cyakang, there is a problem: not enough men attend the dance to participate in the illustrations of the actions of male hunters. In fact, the 'leader' or tutor of the dance group sometimes managed to convince some junior high school students to participate in the dance; at other times, the tutor would have some of the taller females 'play' the male parts.

Finally, even though in 'traditional' and current Taroko culture and society it is largely men in public leadership roles, some women are beginning to participate in this sphere. During the time of my fieldwork, some women from Cyakang participated in local elections, and not just 'behind the scenes,' working to help their husbands or sons; some women actually ran as candidates in the elections. Other women, especially women shopkeepers, also played an active role in the elections. During my fieldwork, two elections were held in Cyakang, one for Village Head and the second for County Councilman.

Lawa, a woman in her 60s, helped her son win the election as Village Head of Cyakang while I was in the field. Her husband used to be a councilman of Hualien County. She runs a small general shop, which has a small swimming pool. The pool is very popular among children in the summer. That little swimming pool earned Lawa a profit of about \$100-200 NTD (\$3.30-6.60 CAD) *per day*. She reported a daily income from her shop of \$300 NTD (\$10.00 CAD),

but her monthly electricity bill ran up to \$4000. NTD (\$133. CAD) or more (because her shop has three refrigerators to keep drinks, meat, other foodstuff cold and a pump to fill the pool). In other words, her shop, including the pool, would earn only a little if it weren't for the fact that her son pays the electricity bill for the shop. However, her running of the shop, with the pool, was critical in helping her son win the election, because of the 'fictitious sisterhood' she cultivated in drinking with village women: every day people gathered in her shop to eat and drink. Many of these people were her relatives. During the election, people often talked about the election. Sometimes Lawa would provide 'treats' for her customers or their children, building up goodwill. Important elders often came to her shop during the elections, some urging other customers to vote for Lawa's son. Lawa's supply network gives her access to drinks, snacks, and alcohol at wholesale prices, thus giving her and her son a cost advantage during the campaign. During the campaign, Lawa also sometimes gathered friends and allies to cook meals for election feasts; the meat and vegetables were contributed by her friends, relatives and customers. In addition to all this, Lawa kept her son's campaign financial records.

Another woman shopkeeper, in her 50s, sells noodles and shaved ice, and she also helped to host feasts during the election campaign period. She used her position as shopkeeper to try to persuade her customers to support her favoured candidates. In these cases, women, often 'hidden' in their small shops, play important roles in the public sphere of village politics.

Dawa, a 43-year-old woman, was a candidate for Village Head. While her husband supported her, other women of Cyakang gossiped that a woman shouldn't run for public office. Dawa tried to turn her female identity to her advantage by campaigning on a promise to improve women's position in the community. She decorated the stage at one election-related feast with

traditional Taroko woven cloth. Her grandmother, who at age 102 in the oldest person in the village, was the only person in Cyakang to still have her face fully tattooed; she was brought to the microphone to persuade people that she had taught her granddaughter Taroko's best traditions. The candidate emphasized how she had fulfilled her motherly duties, providing her children with good educations.

Although Dawa and her allies campaigned strongly for her, she lost the election by a slim margin. She promised that she would run again in the next election. Another woman, Apay, ran for election for head of her neighbourhood ward; she also lost.

But these examples indicate that women in Cyakang do have agency and do sometimes actively seek to transform and improve their world. It is likely that these women in Cyakang feel somewhat empowered by these activities because the women find them meaningful and they give women some respected social roles in the community.

Conclusion

This thesis is based on a combination of anthropological fieldwork among Taroko women in Cyakang village and a review of the existing literature on indigenous peoples worldwide, the indigenous peoples' rights movement worldwide, and the history and political economy of Taiwan and the situation of indigenous peoples in Taiwan. Taroko women's lives (and those of their menfolk as well) were disrupted and transformed by the influence of outsiders, both European and Asian, as discussed in Chapters Three and Four. In this the Taroko are pretty typical of the treatment of indigenous peoples worldwide, as outlined in Chapter Two.

I argued that the notion of “*the* status of women” among the Taroko (or any other people) is overly simplistic and misleading. But this thesis did examine some of the ways in which Taroko women are victims of male violence, especially when men use and abuse alcohol. But I have also attempted to discuss some of the ways in which Taroko women have some independence and autonomy. Three months of fieldwork was probably not long enough to gain a more complete picture of Taroko women; but this is a beginning.

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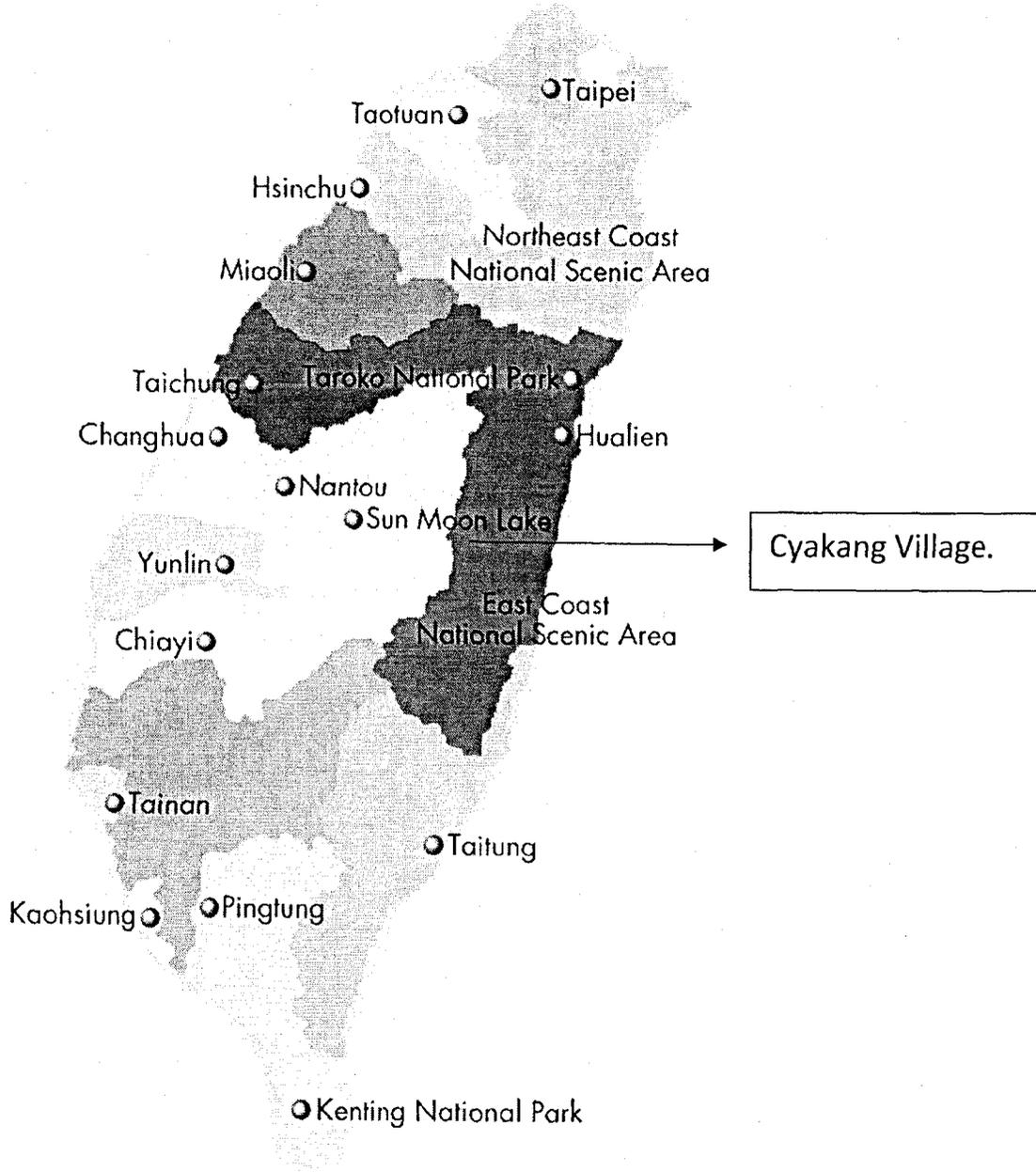
Appendix-I

【Map of Taiwan and mainland Asia】



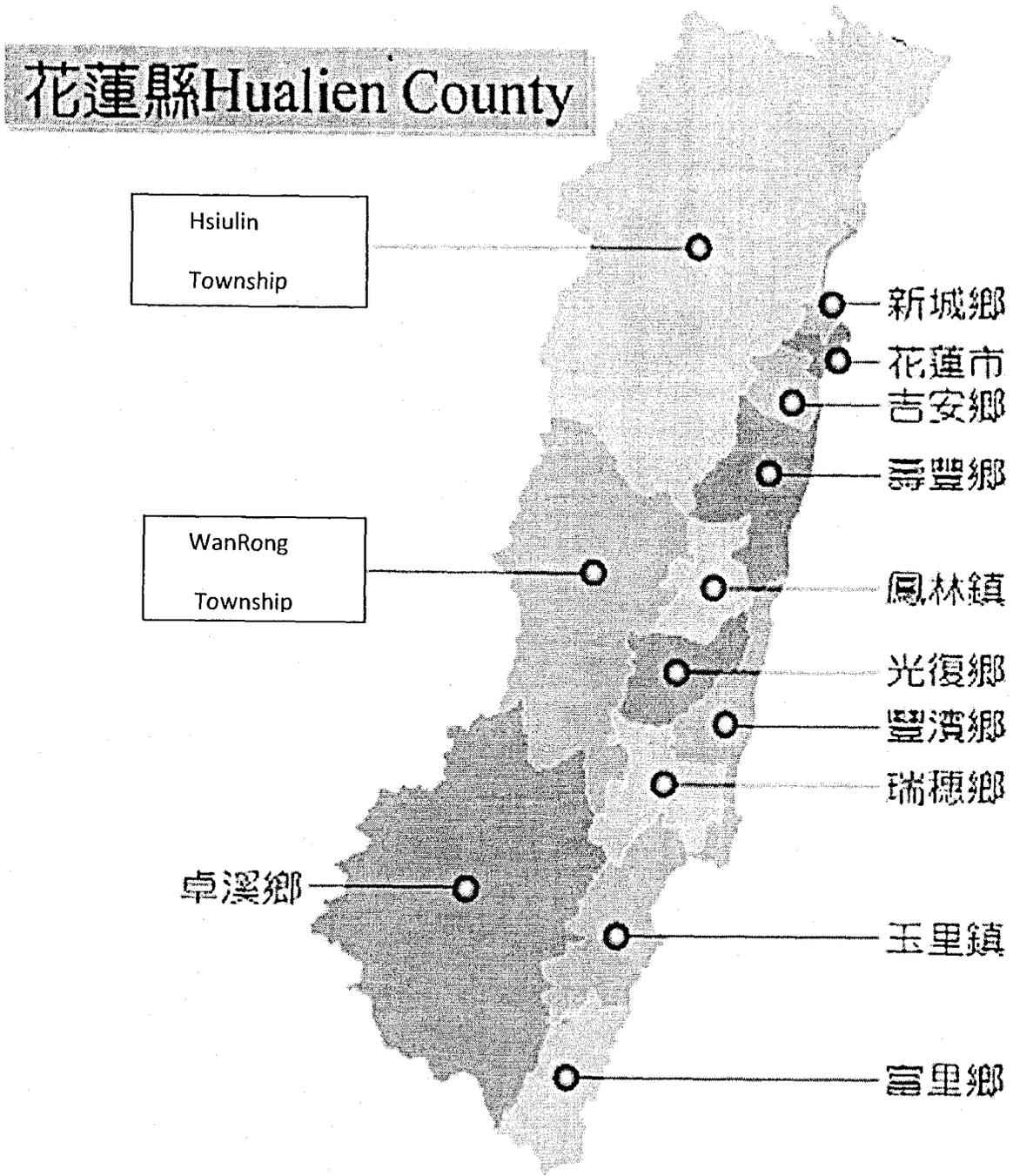
Source: <http://pnstl.phys.ntu.edu.tw/Symposium/SNST3/information.htm>

【Map of Taiwan with Counties】



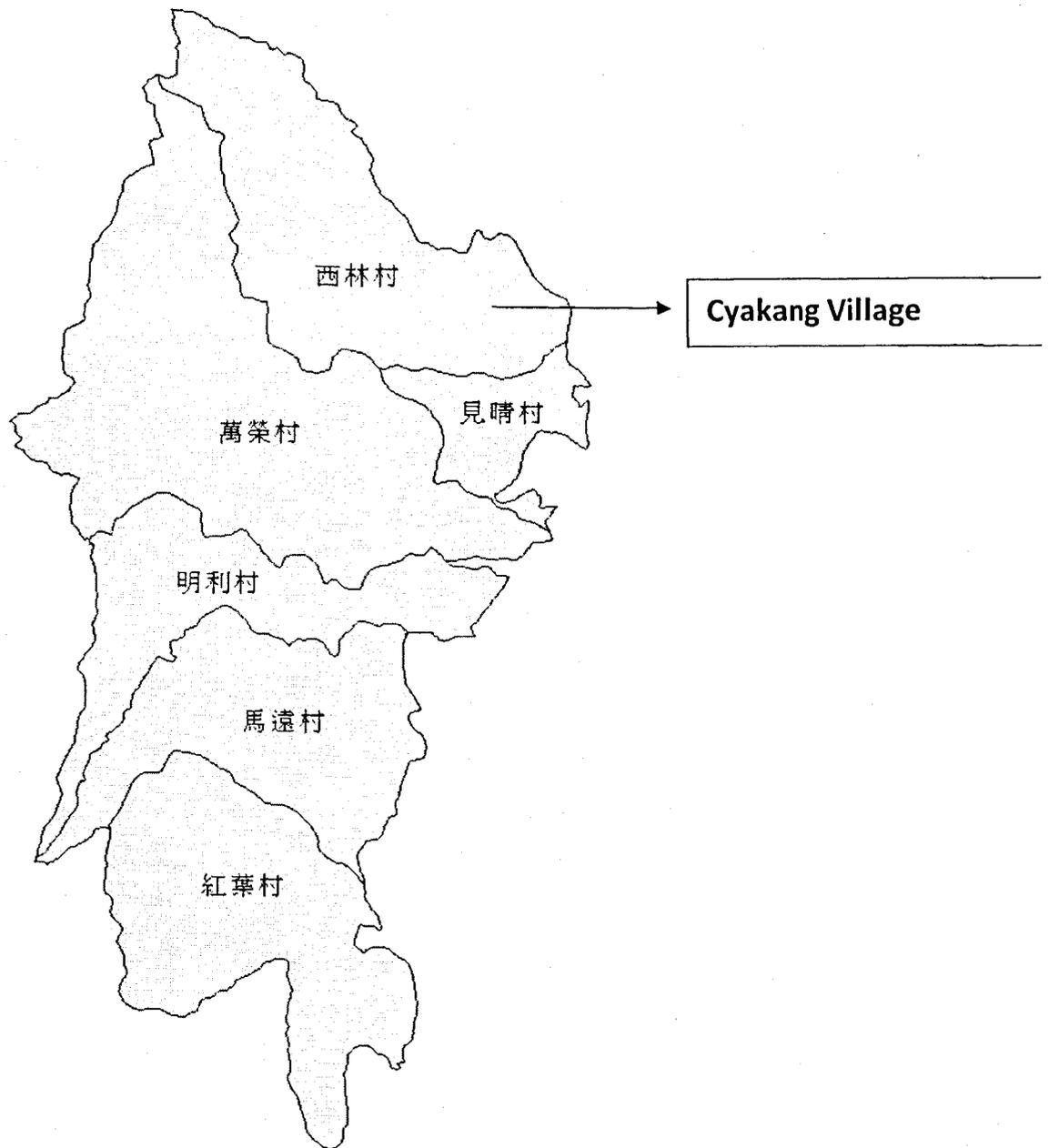
Source: http://www.princeton.edu/~jdonald/taiwan/taiwan_map.jpg

【Map of Hualien County Showing Location of Wanrong Township】



Source: <http://www.321.com.tw/map/hualien-c.jpg>

【Map of Wanrong Township showing Location of Cyakang Village】



Source: <http://www.hlepb.gov.tw/userweb/html2/map/wanrung.jpg>

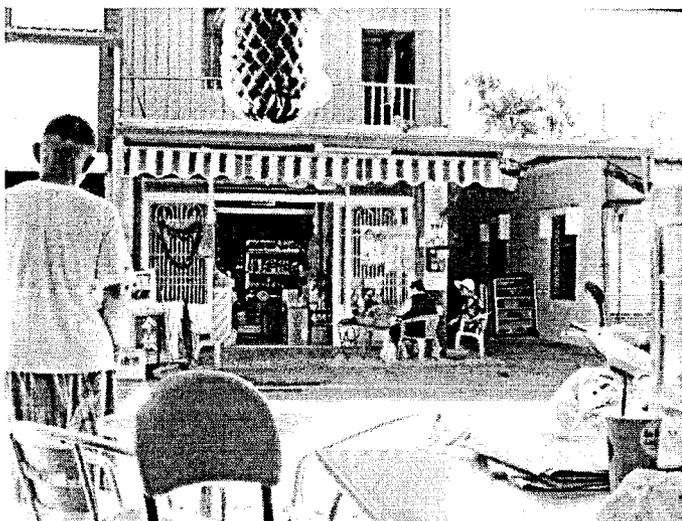
Appendix-II
Cyakang Scene



Main street in
Cyakang



Drying corn and
flying squirrel under
sun



A general store in
Cyakang



Wrapping up betel nuts



Betel nut trees



Growing *Shan-su* (*Asplenium antiquum*) under betel nut trees.

Appendix-III

Pig-Killing Ceremony



Men worked together
to kill a pig



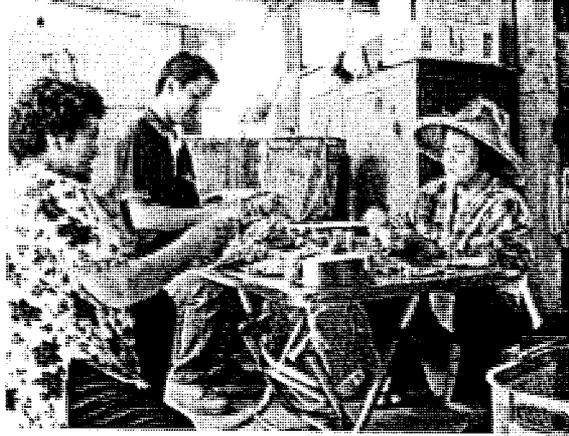
Men divide the meat



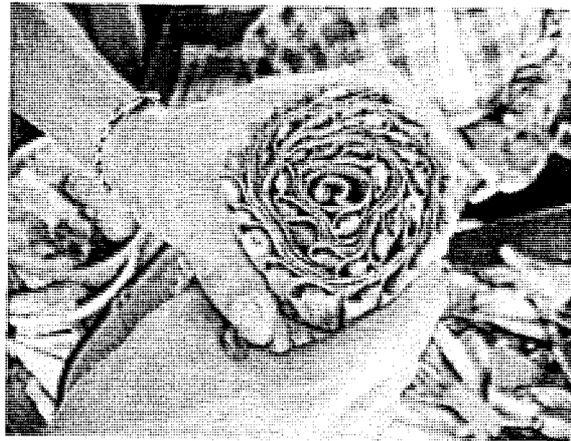
Women deal with
internal organs.

Appendix-IV *Shan-su ban*

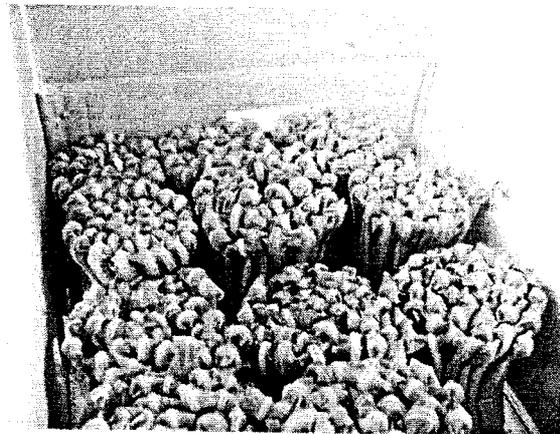
【Picture A】 Picture of Bouquet *Shan-su*; Man in the picture is from the Farm Association who collects the bouquet from Cyakang villagers



【Picture B】 Picture of the cut bottom of a bouquet *Shan-su*



【Picture C】 Picture of bouquet *Shan-su*



Appendix –V Women in Election

【Picture A】 A woman who runs a general shop helps her son in election.



【Picture B】 A woman candidate announces her participation in the election.



【Picture C】 An old grandmother who is the only person still have her face fully tattooed, came to help her granddaughter's election.

