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**Passage to Rights:**  
**Rethinking Indigenous People's Drinking Practices in**  
**Taiwan**



Yi-Cheng Wu

Thesis Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Social Sciences and Health

Department of Anthropology

Durham University

## **Abstract**

This thesis aims to explicate the meaning of indigenous people's drinking practices and their relation to indigenous people's contemporary living situations in settler-colonial Taiwan. 'Problematic' alcohol use has been co-opted into the diagnostic categories of mental disorders; meanwhile, the perception that indigenous people have a high prevalence of drinking nowadays means that government agencies continue to make efforts to reduce such 'problems'. Indigenous people in Taiwan still face continuous marginalisation and systemic discrimination which render drinking a prominent issue. However, interventions based on public health narratives lack efficacy due to discordant understandings of illness, moral experience and perceptions of culture.

Based on 12 months of multi-sited research in Taiwan, my study finds indigenous drinking cultures have been both generated and reshaped by their life situations, both historically and contemporarily. Drinking practices today reveal suffering under structural violence but also show resistance emerging from social change. Drinking is also practised at the interstices of contested values that make health narratives invalid. An ever-reproducing drinking culture shows a gesture of self-fashioning under multiple sufferings, as well as strategies to restore livelihoods. In the time to pursue transitional justice, indigenous people's symbolic sobriety unfolds through resistance against current governmentality over drinking in one sense, but fighting for autonomy in another. Therefore, drinking can be understood as a 'passage to rites/rights' that represents the struggle of indigenous people in search of traditional values and future respect.

# Table of Contents

1. Introduction .....	14
1.1 Research background.....	15
1.1.1 Aims of this research .....	15
1.1.2 The beginning of my anthropological journey.....	19
1.1.3 Preliminary research in Wufeng .....	20
1.2 Current indigenous situations .....	23
1.2.1 <i>Yuanchumin</i> : The people who lived on this land.....	23
1.2.2 Migration and marginalisation under colonialism .....	25
1.2.3 Transitional justice for indigenous people in Taiwan.....	30
1.2.4 Anthropological reflections on indigenous alcohol use.....	32
1.3 Theorising drinking practices .....	37
1.3.1 Practice theories .....	37
1.3.2 Cultural values and everyday morality .....	39
1.3.3 Drinking and Ritual.....	43
1.3.4 Drinking and Tourism.....	45
1.3.5 Structural violence and agency .....	46
1.4 Towards a self-reflective approach.....	48
1.4.1 Professional no more.....	48
1.4.2 ‘You should write it conversely!’ .....	50
1.4.3 Intersubjectivity .....	52
1.5 Thesis outline.....	55
2. Methodology .....	59
2.1 Multi-sited fieldwork in the era of displacement.....	59
2.1.1 ‘Roots and routes’ .....	59
2.1.2 Scale up and scale out .....	61
2.2 General ethical considerations .....	67
2.2.1 The right to informed consent.....	68
2.2.2 Ethical guidelines.....	69
2.2.3 Conclusion .....	74
3. Governing Indigenous People’s Drinking in Taiwan .....	75
3.1 Indigenous people’s drinking in Taiwan: A medical gaze.....	75
3.2 Governing drinking.....	79
3.2.1 <i>Jiejiu</i> : Imposing health citizenship .....	79
3.2.2 Government-commissioned <i>jiejiu</i> projects .....	80
3.2.3 The Love of Maya.....	81
3.3 Delivering Healthcare .....	84



3.3.1 Local health practitioners.....	85
3.3.2 IDS Conference.....	91
3.3.3 Cultural Care in Wufeng.....	94
3.4 Conclusion .....	100
4. Stigma and Stereotype .....	103
4.1 Joking About Drinking .....	104
4.2 The Songs.....	107
4.3 ‘He is just sleeping; he will wake up later’ .....	114
4.3.1 Between ‘Wet’ and ‘Dry’ .....	114
4.3.2 Street Heroes.....	115
4.3.3 Primal scenes .....	118
4.3.4 ‘It is better to die!’ .....	122
4.4 ‘We are not <i>Jiugui</i> ’ (drunkards).....	123
4.4.1 Masculinity, <i>Tayal balay</i> and <i>tqwau</i> .....	123
4.4.2 Women, the light drinkers.....	127
4.5 Blaming the governors.....	130
4.5.1 The alcohol monopoly .....	131
4.5.2 Alcohol Reserved for the Highlands.....	134
4.6 Conclusion .....	137
5. Between Sacred and Secular.....	139
5.1 Drinking and Atayal’s <i>Gaga</i> .....	140
5.1.1 <i>Gaga</i> and the sacred wine .....	140
5.1.2 Christianity and cultural practices .....	146
5.2 Rituals in Wufeng .....	149
5.2.1 Carnivalisation of <i>PaSta’ay</i> .....	150
5.2.2 <i>Pslkawtas</i> day and night: The revolving stage of cultural practice ..	153
5.2.3 Impure <i>Xiaomijiu</i> .....	162
5.3 <i>Ilisin</i> in Makotaay .....	169
5.3.1 The <i>buluo</i> beside the coastal highway .....	169
5.3.2 The rituals of <i>Ilisin</i> .....	171
5.3.3 ‘Dear rice wine, you are defeated!’ .....	173
5.3.4 Rituals that change with the times .....	177
5.3.5 <i>O’lalan ko epah</i> .....	180
5.4 Conclusion .....	181
6. Drinking and Dispossession.....	185
6.1 Drinking Under Structural Violence.....	185
6.1.1 The ‘party-state capitalism’ regime .....	186
6.1.2 The Eviction of Vendors in Ulay .....	188

6.1.3 Drink when the heart hurts.....	191
6.2 Drinking When the Land is Lost.....	195
6.2.1 A journey to recover lost territories: A Protest in Taipei.....	195
6.2.2 The Deprivation of Land Rights .....	200
6.2.3 The mystery of the missing man.....	204
6.2.4 An old farmer's suicide.....	205
6.3 Intoxicated diaspora .....	210
6.3.1 Paolyta: Drug food behind the economic miracle.....	210
6.3.2 Indigenous labourers in Hsinchu .....	216
6.3.3 <i>Fengnianji</i> , conviviality on the riverbank.....	223
6.3.4 'Jin du' and 'Wen zhu' in everyday commensality.....	226
6. 4 Orchid Island: From social suffering to a new normal .....	231
6.4.1 Tao: A people without a winemaking tradition .....	232
6.4.2 Incongruent demands for health.....	239
6.4.5 Anti-Nuclear Bar: Exploiting Drinking Stereotypes.....	245
6.4.6 Drinking: A New Normal .....	249
6.5 Conclusion .....	253
7. Fighting to Live Sober .....	255
7.1 Aboriginal Victory Association .....	257
7.1.1 'I'm indigenous, and I don't drink' .....	257
7.1.2 The 'adulterated wine' event .....	260
7.1.3 Daily routines in AVA .....	262
7.1.4 All we can do is pray .....	263
7.1.5 Life stories of AVA Brothers.....	265
7.2 Kalibuan: An Alcohol-Free <i>buluo</i> .....	274
7.2.1 An alcohol-free <i>buluo</i> that rose to fame .....	277
7.2.2 The Alcohol-Free Movement: Action After the Earthquake .....	279
7.2.3 The Land and the <i>Pingquanhui</i> .....	283
7.2.4 Rituals without alcohol .....	285
7.3 Post-Disaster Rehabilitations .....	288
7.3.1 Beyond the medical perspectives.....	289
7.3.2 Da-ai Village: A picture of relocated people .....	291
7.3.3 Women Power in Takanua.....	296
7.4 Resilience from the margin.....	305
7.4.1 Libahak and CAS Farm .....	306
7.4.2 Singing Competition as Sober Conviviality .....	310
7.5 The <i>Buluo</i> Meetings: In Search of Autonomy .....	313
7.5.1 The Situation in Ulay .....	315

7.5.2 The boundaries .....	317
7.5.3 The paradox .....	319
7.6 Conclusion .....	320
8. Conclusion .....	323
8.1 Routing Drinking Cultures .....	323
8.1.1 Missing and met .....	323
8.1.2 Displacement, replacement and emplacement .....	326
8.2 The Betweenness .....	328
8.2.1 Entangled emotions .....	329
8.2.2 Liminality .....	330
8.3 Alcohol as negative capital .....	332
8.3.1 Symbolic capital of negativity .....	332
8.3.2 Toward symbolic sobriety .....	334
8.4.1 Victimhood .....	337
8.4.2 No one is an outsider .....	341
8.5 The passage to rites/rights .....	344
<b>Bibliography .....</b>	<b>350</b>

## List of Figures and Diagrams

### Chapter 1

- Figure 1. 1 The map of Taiwan, an island nation located across the Taiwan Strait from China..... 18
- Figure 1. 2 Ethnic distribution map of Taiwan indigenous people.....25
- Figure 1.3 Spatial pattern of flows of repeat migrants for Taiwan indigenous people.....28
- Figure 1.4 The population distribution of all Taiwan's indigenous people. 29
- Figure 1. 5 Atayal loom made of wood, with a piece of unfinished woven ramie textile attached. ....39
- Figure 1. 6 An Atayal woman in Wufeng practises weaving, passing down her culture. ....39

### Chapter 2

- Figure 2. 1 The map of multi-sited fieldwork.....66

### Chapter 3

- Figure 3. 1 Participants of 'The Love of Maya' project gathered in a township vowing to quit drinking. ....83
- Figure 3. 2 Local medical institutions attended the conference and displayed their project reports with posters.....92
- Figure 3. 3 The community leader of Smangus, Masay Sulung, performing *lubuw* at the IDS conference. ....92
- Figure 3. 4 Tribal Culture and Health Station in Taoshan Village, Wufeng. ....96
- Figure 3. 5 Discussion of the everyday use of various drinks. ....99
- Figure 3. 6 The map of Wufeng Township..... 102

### Chapter 4

- Figure 4. 1 A supposedly humorous picture shows the secret to not getting drunk for indigenous people. .... 105
- Figure 4. 2 A screenshot from the comedy talk show 'The Gang of Kuo Kuan' that reinforces stereotypes of indigenous people's alcohol use. .... 107
- Figure 4. 3 The poster for the musical 'On the Road'. .... 109
- Figure 4. 4 A drunken man lying on his stomach on the roadside in Wufeng. .... 116
- Figure 4. 5 A picture in a magazine called 'Hope'. .... 117

Figure 4. 6 The Wufeng villagers leave a glass of rice wine and light a cigarette at the memorial monument for victims of Typhoon Aere every day.....	120
Figure 4. 7 Screenshot from the comedy-drama ‘The Street Heroes’ created by the Paiwan youth of Pacavalj <i>Buluo</i> in Taitung.....	123
Figure 4. 8 ‘ <i>Shan di zhuan yong</i> ’ wine bottles on display in a restaurant in Smangus (Xinguang) .....	136
Figure 4. 9 Losing treated me to home-brewed fruit wine. ....	136
Figure 4. 10 People in Cinsbu sit around the fire discussing their food storage plans.....	137

## Chapter 5

Figure 5. 1 In the centre of the arena, Saisyat people entertain the spirits of <i>ta’ay</i> by dancing and singing. <i>Pinotata</i> ’ (traditional millet wine) is provided for the dancers during the ceremony. ....	150
Figure 5. 2 The ceremony arena was surrounded by local vendors. They sold not only traditional wines, <i>Pinotata</i> ’, but also Taiwan Beers and energy drinks like Paolyta-B, which contain alcohol. ....	153
Figure 5. 3 The elderly pour <i>qwau</i> into bamboo tubes to treat the ‘ <i>lkawstas</i> ’. .....	157
Figure 5. 4 A meeting in the ritual house.....	158
Figure 5. 5 The man who stays in the ritual house to take care of the fire.....	158
Figure 5. 6 Under the shed are seats reserved for officials and special guests. ....	160
Figure 5. 7 The officiant displaying a flying squirrel which was hunted down in the mountain.....	160
Figure 5. 8 The map of Makotaay and its surrounding area. ....	170
Figure 5. 9 Shihtiping (Stone Stair Terrace), an iconic scenic area near Makotaay.....	170
Figure 5. 10 The entrance to the <i>Ilisin</i> arena. A billboard was set up to announce the rules of attending the ceremony, including regulations on photography. ....	171
Figure 5. 11 The <i>Paawak</i> ritual. The tribal leader encourages a young man to drink the rice wine. ....	174
Figure 5. 12 Rahic Talif (right), an Amis artist, was dancing as a youth member of the youth group in <i>Ilisin</i> . ....	176

## Chapter 6

Figure 6. 1 A banner which reads ‘The Township Mayor Split Our People’.	188
Figure 6. 2 The food vendors’ area, half of which had been torn down. ...	195
Figure 6. 3 Indigenous activists stationed outside of a MRT exit. ....	196
Figure 6. 4 The rally in front of the Executive Yuan. ....	197
Figure 6. 5 An example of a homophonous pun: an enamel cup that reads ‘No One is an Outsider’ designed by adapting ‘ <i>qianbei</i> ’ from the president’s speech .....	199
Figure 6. 6 The remains of a landslide in Wufeng. ....	208
Figure 6. 7 Left: A local government's billboard, advertising the Hsinchu County’s achievement of joining WHO Western Pacific Healthy Cities programmes. Right: A government campaign encouraging local people to report illegal deforestation. ....	208
Figure 6. 8 The TV advertisements for Paolyta-B. ....	212
Figure 6. 9 Left: A list of indigenous ‘cocktails’. Right: A billboard of indigenous cocktails at a local bar in Tiehua Music Village, Hualien. .....	214
Figure 6. 10 Indigenous YouTubers demonstrate how to make indigenous cocktails with Paolyta-B. ....	215
Figure 6. 11 The distribution of urban indigenous communities in Hsinchu City and other related sites. ....	218
Figure 6. 12 A fishing net bag full of beer cans on the embankment besides Naruwan community. ....	220
Figure 6. 13 Amis people of Naruwan community celebrate Mother’s Day by commensality and newly invented rituals. In the right pictures, men are washing their mothers’ feet to show respect. ....	220
Figure 6. 14 The design of the bridge reveals the uneven development of the city. (The red mark on the map: Qianjia). ....	224
Figure 6. 15 Indigenous people in Qianjia, Hsunchu city were preparing <i>fengnianji</i> by killing a pig, just like they do in their home villages. ...	226
Figure 6. 16 I shared dinner with urban indigenous people in front of their houses (blurring effect added). ....	231
Figure 6. 17 The map of Orchid Island (Lanyu) and the sites that I visited. .....	234
Figure 6. 18 Ader carrying tourists with his <i>tatala</i> . ....	235
Figure 6. 19 The older people drink under the roof of <i>tagakal</i> . ....	238
Figure 6. 20 Tatala on the beach of Orchid Island. ....	245

Figure 6. 21 Left: The anti-nuclear slogan, ‘ <i>zhi yao he, bu yao he</i> ’ (Photo: Chia-ling Wu). Right: Nan’ao Atayal youths join the anti-nuclear rally in Taipei, 2018. ....	246
Figure 6. 22 Anti-nuclear bar. A petroleum barrel painted in yellow like nuclear waste storage. ....	247
Figure 6. 23 Customers of the Anti-Nuclear Bar pose to represent the slogan ‘I am human, I am anti-nuclear’. ....	247
Figure 6. 24 A visitor tasting the Radiation Special Blend cocktail. ....	249
Figure 6. 25 The food stand that sells <i>Lanyu Xiaomijiu</i> (Orchid Island millet wine) ....	251
Figure 6. 26 Left: Rice wine coffee. Right: Craft beer, ‘Water of the People’. ....	252

## Chapter 7

Figure 7. 1 A sticker on the back of a van saying ‘I’m indigenous, and I don’t drink’. ....	258
Figure 7. 2 AVA Brothers say ‘Hallelujah!’ loudly toward the sky. ....	263
Figure 7. 3 An AVA Brother blows a shofar. ....	263
Figure 7. 4 AVA Brothers pray in a corrugated metal house. ....	265
Figure 7. 5 Kalibuan, a Bunun <i>buluo</i> that has become well-known for its Alcohol-free Movement. ....	275
Figure 7. 6 The location of Kalibuan and its surrounding area. ....	277
Figure 7. 7 A screenshot of the news of the Alcohol-free Tribe. ....	278
Figure 7. 8 Kalibuan’s ‘living covenant’. ....	282
Figure 7. 9 The local shop’s announcement that reads ‘This shop supports the idea of an alcohol-free environment and not to sell alcohol to adolescents.’ ....	283
Figure 7. 10 A stone shale that lists Bunun’s seasonal rituals and introduces the villagers’ living situations. ....	285
Figure 7. 11 Xiaolin Village Memorial Park, hundreds of empty tombs were established along the highway that connects Shanlin to Namasia. ....	290
Figure 7. 12 Statues of Tzu Chi volunteers helping indigenous people rebuild their homeland. ....	292
Figure 7. 13 School pupils performing <i>Malastapang</i> under outdoor scaffolding. ....	296
Figure 7. 14 The volunteers were giving a lesson on gender education to the kids in Takanua. ....	298
Figure 7. 15 The bakery kiln in <i>To’onnatamu</i> . ....	301

Figure 7. 16 A picture hanging under the roof of <i>To'onnatamu</i> , showing someone pouring rose millet wine. ....	303
Figure 7. 17 The map of Morakot Typhoon disaster area and the sites that I visited. ....	305
Figure 7. 18 Ji-jiao-ci ( <i>Cirsium albescens</i> ), a kind of traditional herbal medicine for liver disease .....	310
Figure 7. 19 The performers waiting at the preparation area of the singing competition. ....	313
Figure 7. 20 People prepare pork before the preparatory meeting of the Ulay Tribal Council. After the meeting, people ate together in a ' <i>plahan</i> '. ....	317

## Chapter 8

Figure 8. 1 The slogan 'No One is an Outsider' printed on the yellow towels. ....	344
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Diagram 5. 1 Atayal Cosmology.....	141
------------------------------------	-----

Diagram 5. 2 The practise of <i>Gaga</i> . ....	145
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(All photos were taken by Yi-Cheng Wu, unless noted in the main text or picture annotations. Some photographs were artistically modified due to concerns for anonymity. Pictures retrieved from open web pages or published materials are not pixelated.)

The cover picture: Indigenous dock labourer, 'Bottom up', 1979, water colour by Taiwanese artist Lin Da-yang (林大洋)



## List of Tables

### Chapter 2

Table 2. 1 The places where I stayed and visited. ....	65
Table 2. 2 The list of interviewees for in-depth interviews .....	72
Table 2. 3 The list of focus groups .....	73
Table 2. 4 The lists of the events that the researcher experienced during the fieldwork. ....	73

### Chapter 6

Table 6. 1 The lists of popular indigenous cocktails among indigenous communities. ....	216
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## List of Abbreviations

AVA: Aboriginal Victory Association

CSA: Community Supported Agriculture

DPP\*: Democratic Progressive Party

IDS: Integrated Delivery Systems

KMT\*: Kuomintang

\* Both KMT and DPP are political parties in Taiwan

## Definitions of specific terms in this thesis

*Gaga*: The traditional ethnic knowledge including the social constraints of the Atayal people. Details in Chapter 5.1.

*Jiejiu*: 節酒, the Mandarin Chinese term for moderate drinking. Details in Chapter 1.1.3.

*Buluo*: The translated Mandarin Chinese term ‘buluo’ (部落) is derived from the Japanese term ‘buraku’ (ぶらく), referring to the unit of an indigenous social group. Detailed explanation can be seen in Footnote 3 in Chapter 1.1.2. In this thesis, I use this term to avoid the word ‘tribe’ that may connote the stereotype of primitiveness.

*Paolyta*: 保力達, the brief name of Paolyta-B, a popular energy drink that contains Chinese herbal medicine, vitamins, amino acids and alcohol. Details can be seen in Chapter 6.3.1.

## Declaration

The contents of this thesis are produced solely for the qualification of Doctor of Philosophy at Durham University and consist of the author's original individual contribution with appropriate recognition of any references being indicated throughout.

## Statement of Copyright

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author. No quotation from it should be published without the author's prior written consent and information derived from it should be acknowledged.

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I thank all my informants and who assisted me with my fieldwork in Taiwan for their generosity and hospitality. In Durham, I truly appreciate the comments and suggestions from the members of my progression panel, Kate Hampshire and Tom Widger. I cannot thank enough my supervisors, Andrew Russell, Paolo Fortis and Tom Widger enough for their guidance and time. I am especially thankful to my PhD colleagues in Durham University's Anthropology Department, who not only provided research ideas but accompanied my sons when I was a parent-student in Durham. Also, I would like to thank the Taiwan Ministry of Education and Hsinchu Mackay Memorial Hospital for sponsoring my research and my development as a researcher.

Finally, I wish to attempt to express my deep feelings which are tacit and wordless. This thesis is a reflective footnote of my practical knowledge. The road to anthropology is my rite of passage, which enlightens the reflexivity that I should embrace throughout my professional career, both as an ethnographer and a physician. As a believer, I thank God for granting me courage and wisdom. Sometimes I feel them as auras in my life. Only by leaving the therapeutic room where I used to listen to people's sufferings can I witness my vulnerability and insufficiency. I am lucky to learn the values of reciprocity and mutual trustworthiness before I call for love and justice. I owe a great debt of gratitude to all I met and who light up the path on this journey.

# 1. Introduction

Give them dozens and dozens of bottles,  
Paralyse them with an overdose of liquor,  
Drown them in excessive liquid.  
Rice wine, beer, Shaoxing<sup>1</sup> and Paolyta<sup>2</sup> are all fine,  
No matter whether they are from Taiwan, China or other foreign countries.<sup>3</sup>

Walis Nokan, Atayal poet

From the poem *Give them dozens and dozens of bottles*<sup>4</sup>

Alcohol use has had a tremendous impact on indigenous people's health and, in Taiwan, is linked to many common stereotypes about them. It is difficult to refute the claim that drinking is common and potentially problematic among indigenous people in Taiwan. The words from the Atayal poet Walis Nokan show a pessimistic attitude towards alcohol use among indigenous people.

Drinking has been considered a sacred part of indigenous life, but drinking patterns alter as a result of social change and result in negative criticism by the general public. Drinking has become a controversial issue among indigenous groups in recent years, but the high prevalence of alcohol use among Taiwanese indigenous

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<sup>1</sup> Shaoxing is one of the varieties of traditional Chinese wines, *huangjiu* (yellow wine). It originates from eastern China and fermented from rice.

<sup>2</sup> Paolyta-B is a popular energy drink that contains Chinese herbal medicine and alcohol. Although the full brand name of the drink is Paolyta-B, indigenous people call it Paolyta and so this is used throughout the thesis. More details are in Chapter 6.3.1.

<sup>3</sup> Original text in Chinese as follows: 就丟給他們一打一打瓶子 / 米酒啤酒紹興酒保力達都無所謂 / 就用過量的酒精麻痺他們 / 台灣酒洋酒大陸酒都無妨 / 就用過量的液體淹沒他們

<sup>4</sup> All poems and songs written in Chinese or indigenous languages are translated to English by Yi-Cheng Wu in this thesis.

people is well documented and the government still continues to launch health intervention projects against it. The problem is this: what are the ‘facts’ regarding drinking among indigenous people? How do indigenous people perceive the stereotype or interpret themselves as drinkers? Is it possible to diminish the stigma?

In answering these questions, this study aims to rethink indigenous people’s alcohol use. Given the premise that Taiwanese indigenous people still seek both justice and political sovereignty today, I propose the need to sharpen our understanding of the relationship between indigenous people’s alcohol use and their contemporary colonial situation. Through this study, I reflect on the reductive narratives of public health, and offer new insights and interpretations into the drinking practices of these stigmatised groups.

## **1.1 Research background**

### **1.1.1 Aims of this research**

There are two major aims of this research. The first is to explain the positioning of medical narratives about alcohol use which have been applied to minority groups within specific historical and cultural backgrounds, particularly in Taiwan (Figure 1. 1). The second is to know how indigenous culture has been reshaped post-colonially and in the current settler-colonial regime, and the commonality of alcohol to both endeavours.

Harmful alcohol consumption is one of the most prevalent risk factors that increases the burden of non-communicable diseases (NCD) and creates global inequalities (Di Cesare et al. 2013; WHO 2004). Alcohol is a particular burden to low-income countries, with people in the ‘Global South’ exposed to more risk factors, particularly under neoliberal regimes (Glasgow and Schrecker 2015). Indigenous

people are one of the most vulnerable groups in this sense. However, indigenous people's drinking should not be defined as merely hazardous behaviour regarding health, but rather an emotional practice that can be understood based on what Scheper-Hughes and Lock (1987:28) call the 'mediatrix of the three bodies'. By this, they are referring to emotionally mediated interactions among individual, social and political registers. Alcohol use is always tightly bound to the emotions pertaining to all these levels, and such emotional complexity explains why health interventions targeting indigenous people's alcohol use focussed purely on the individual level are unlikely to succeed.

Starting in the 1980s, the Taiwanese government launched health intervention programmes to target indigenous alcohol use. In 2005, the Council of Indigenous Peoples implemented 'Finding selves, promoting health: Moderate Drinking Project' by offering funding to local governments and organisations. The pilot project, 'The Love of Maya', launched in 2006 and led by the Namasia Township,<sup>5</sup> became an exemplar. It encouraged villagers to stop drinking by providing financial rewards and conducted blood tests to check participants' ethanol levels before and after the intervention. Since then the government has continued to address indigenous people's drinking with similar intervention programmes (Wu 2019). However, the outcomes have always been inconspicuous.

Meanwhile, in recent decades, Taiwanese indigenous people began to fight for their rights. These struggles first aimed at equal treatment but nowadays are more often based on the goal of self-determination. In their search for sovereignty, drinking then becomes an even more contentious issue among indigenous communities, and

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<sup>5</sup> Namasia Township (Now Namasia District), formerly Sanmin Township (三民鄉, taken from the Sun Yat-sen's Three Principles of the People), is an indigenous district located in northeast Kaohsiung. It was called Maya Township before 1958. Having been called Sanmin Township for 50 years, its name was changed to Namasia Township in 2008.

public health narratives regarding drinking become challenged. In fact, there is always a tension between either problematising or exoticising alcohol use among indigenous people without considering the tangle of values that either approach assumes. Therefore, this study aims to reflect on the epistemology of indigenous people's drinking practices, presenting what indigenous people themselves think, know/believe and do with regard to alcohol.



Figure 1. 1 The map of Taiwan, an island nation located across the Taiwan Strait from China.

(Retrieved from the Nations Online Project: <https://www.nationsonline.org/>).



### 1.1.2 The beginning of my anthropological journey

When Typhoon Morakot hit southern Taiwan in 2008, I was a psychiatric resident doctor in a medical centre in Kaohsiung. I participated in a study plan which was funded by the government to survey the prevalence of mental illness in indigenous communities and establish post-disaster rehabilitation guidelines. Confused about the research methods, I was nervous that standardised diagnostics seemed unable to account accurately for the real situation in the disaster area. Some interviewees even told me they felt happier after the flood, since it made the community more cohesive in some sense: ‘Everybody was helping each other.’

Meanwhile, within the hospital, some of my colleagues also visited the indigenous *buluo*<sup>6</sup> in the disaster area to provide medical services. They said ‘The indigenous people are the most faithful consumers of Taiwan Tobacco and the Liquor Monopoly Bureau (菸酒公賣局).’ I have since wondered: if I were able to return to the Morakot disaster area, how would I re-tell the story?

In 2010, I attended the ‘International Mental Health Short Course’ summer school at King’s College’s Health Service and Population Research Department Summer School in London. The course caused me to reflect on my approach to victimhood during the disaster and I realised that the toolkits I had embraced, namely the diagnostic manual and questionnaires which are the bread and butter of psychiatry, were insufficient. There was a need for interdisciplinary collaboration with experts

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<sup>6</sup> The Mandarin Chinese term ‘*buluo*’ (部落) is derived from the Japanese term ‘*buraku*’ (ぶらく), referring to the unit of an indigenous social group. The Japanese term *buraku* means ‘tribe’, which was given in colonial during Japan’s rule and has been criticised because it connotes the stereotype of primitiveness. *Bu lu* has been often translated as ‘tribe’. Friedman (2018) suggests using *buluo* in the proper sense of the term. Unlike the traditional anthropological definition of the groups of natives, currently *buluo* in Taiwan means a quasi-public juristic person based on Administrative Organization Law that the enactment of legislation on tribal public juristic persons aims at re-establishing indigenous traditional organisations and preparation for self-governance of indigenous people. Until 2018, there are 746 officially registered indigenous *buluo* in Taiwan. These are all for the future purpose of exercising tribal collective rights.

from the social sciences, oral history and experts by experience, while a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches would complement each other. In the short course, a call to ‘scale up’ the coverage of services for people with mental health problems in areas where resources are currently insufficient (Patel 2012; 2015; Patel and Hanlon 2018) inspired my future work with indigenous communities.

In 2011, when I completed my speciality training in psychiatry, I attended the Anthropology Camp organised by the Academia Sinica Institute of Ethnology. I took a picture in Wu-Jie, a Bu-nun *buluo* in central Taiwan, outside the public health office. On the board was a ‘*Jiejiu* Covenant’ (節酒公約) to encourage the villagers to moderate their alcohol consumption. When I posted the photo on social media, adding a caption, ‘Stigma’, one of my classmates, an indigenous doctor, replied ‘They just do what they can do.’ It indicated that alcohol abuse by indigenous people was a real problem and one with which indigenous practitioners continue to struggle.

### **1.1.3 Preliminary research in Wufeng**

From 2012 to 2015, I served as a medical doctor, taking part in a hospital’s *jiejiu* (moderate drinking) project in Wufeng, a mountain indigenous township which has a population of nearly 4,800 in Hsinchu County, Taiwan (Figure 3.7). Wufeng is home to Atayal and Saisiyat people, determined by epidemiologists as one of the indigenous townships in Taiwan with a high prevalence of smoking, drinking and betel quid chewing (Liu et al. 1994). Meanwhile, I conducted ethnographical research as part of my Master’s at the Institute of Anthropology, National Tsing Hua University, Taiwan.

*Jiejiu* is pronounced in several ways in Mandarin Chinese, all of which refer to different meanings. *Jiǔ* (酒) means ‘alcohol’. The general concept of the programme is to address alcohol-related problems by refraining from excessive drinking. In this

sense, *jiè* (戒) refers to ‘abstinence’ (戒酒). However, indigenous people show ambivalent attitudes toward abstinence because they think that completely refraining from alcohol consumption is impossible. Hence, they prefer to use the word *jié* (節), which means ‘to control’. A few local people would rather use the word *jiě* (解), which doubly means ‘solving’ the problem and ‘detoxification’. In this case, *jiejiu* means ‘moderate drinking’.

This ‘*jiejiu*’ project was part of the contracted integrated delivery systems (IDSs) as one of the health delivery policies for indigenous townships and was strategically designed as a collaborative plan with local farm owners. These farm owners agreed to provide one-year jobs for indigenous people who were abstaining from alcohol and needed income, which was paid from the hospital’s self-raised funding. People who took part in the project were called *jiejiuban*, *ban* (班) meaning a working or learning group. At the beginning of the project, the *jiejiuban* were required to take a breathalyser test before starting work every morning and to visit a psychiatrist monthly.

According to the study, the people targeted by the *jiejiu* project were not able to fit into the diagnostic category. Such unfitness also indicates the need for more consideration regarding health interventions in minority groups. *Jiejiuban* participants do not fit the role of ‘patients’ but are mostly ‘normal people’ when defined from the local perspective. The *jiejiu* project set regulations asking the participants to see the doctor regularly as a way of treatment. However, these participants, and most Wufeng people, are not prepared for the establishment of a psychiatric clinic and the ‘obligation’ to consult a psychiatrist. The gap in conceptions of disease between the Atayal people and Western medicine leads to unwillingness to visit the psychiatric clinic since there is no notion of ‘mental health/disease’ in Atayal or Saisiyat

conceptual and linguistic categories. Also, the standardised diagnosis and evaluation tools of psychiatrists are impractical because their logic contradicts local cultural norms and moralities around drinking. The intervention even generates a new form of stigmatisation for the *jiejiuban* members who bear multi-level stigma, reinforcing and entangling the negative images of being a patient, being unemployed and being morally defective.

The preliminary study based on my experience of clinical practice in an indigenous community enabled me to realise that raising awareness about mental health issues regarding alcohol use remains difficult, not because of the indigenous township's lack of medical resources, but rather the difficulty in applying medical narratives to the local settings.

In the study, I found indigenous people expressed a range of opinions toward their 'drinking culture'. Local health practitioners encourage local people to establish moderate drinking habits by stressing 'good drinking culture'. However, 'goodness' remains a nebulous term in a context where traditional lifestyles are under threat. I also find interventions based on Western psychiatric categories can lose their efficacy because of disparate understandings regarding illness, moral experience and perceptions of indigenous drinking cultures, and conclude 'the hardship mostly stems from hesitant self-identification and ambivalence toward a drinking culture shaped by social changes wrought by marginalisation and oppression through colonization' (Wu 2019:237).

However, more questions arose as I gradually understood that indigenous people are not conceptually opposed to Western medicine and modern psychiatry since they still seek medical care. Even though I noticed the 'ambiguity in drinking culture', that statement may result in neglect of the power relationships between dominant Han and

indigenous groups, as well as the effects of the state. Would that way of saying ‘ambiguity’ degrade indigenous people’s sovereignty and resistance, and ignore those more subtle psychological mechanisms and subjective concerns? In this sense, the reasons behind ‘ambivalent drinking culture’ would be too reductive, indicating that more effort may be needed to unpack its meaning.

## 1.2 Current indigenous situations

### 1.2.1 *Yuanchumin*: The people who lived on this land

Taiwanese indigenous people, who mostly belong to Austronesian ethnicities, started to accept the Mandarin term ‘*yuanchumin*’ (原住民) through the Identity Movement in the 1980s. The Mandarin term before ‘*yuanchumin*’ was ‘*shandijen*’ (山地人) which means ‘highlands people’, although not all live in the mountains. The term ‘*yuanchumin*’ means people who lived on this land before the arrival of the state but continue to live in a colonial situation since Taiwan is still ruled by the Chinese-state government, which had historically been dominated by the Kuomintang (KMT<sup>7</sup>) (Simon 2017:237). Currently, there are sixteen officially recognised indigenous groups (Figure 1. 2).

Indigenous people in Taiwan have gone through a long period of colonisation. Japan ruled Taiwan from 1895 to 1945. Following this was the Kuomintang single-party rule (1945–1987). Due to the colonial history, some indigenous elders over the age of 70 can speak fluent Japanese. At present, most indigenous people can speak Mandarin Chinese after the long period of KMT governance afterwards. Although martial law was lifted in 1988, which means a transition in the political

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<sup>7</sup> Kuomintang (KMT) was the ruling party in Mainland China from 1928 until its escape to Taiwan in 1949 after being defeated by the Communist Party during the Chinese Civil War. KMT ruled Taiwan as a one-party dictatorship from 1949 to 2000.

situation from single-party autocracy to democracy, researchers still highlight ‘settler-colonialism’ to characterise the relationship between state governance and vulnerable indigenous populations (Hsu, Howitt, and Miller 2015; Shih 2011, 2012; Shih 2014a, 2014b).

The proportion of the indigenous population shows a continuously growing trend. In the 1980s, the proportion of indigenous people was approximately 1.7% (or 310,000 people) of Taiwan’s entire population of 18,790,538 (Li 1984). Up to 2018, the indigenous population had risen to 564,120 among 23,580,833 (2.4% of Taiwan’s entire population). This steady increase in population proportion since the early 1980s is not solely the result of natural growth. The main reason is that indigenes and persons of mixed blood have been free to decide their own ethnic affiliations and to change their registration at the Household Registration Office since the 1990s, while grassroots indigenous movements have begun to attract general public interest (Huang and Liu 2016).



Figure 1. 2 Ethnic distribution map of Taiwan indigenous people (Retrieved from: <https://gpi.culture.tw/news/9698>)

### 1.2.2 Migration and marginalisation under colonialism

Indigenous people in Taiwan have experienced several waves of massive migration (Figure 1.3). Although the stereotype was of indigenous people mostly living in the mountains, nowadays, indigenous populations in urban areas have rapidly increased (Figure 1.4). During Japanese rule, the policy of ‘collective relocations’ launched by the Office of the Governor-General forced indigenous people from the mountains to migrate to foothill areas in the 1930s. ‘Collective relocations’ were the starting point for the breakup of social relationships of indigenous communities (Yap 2016). The collective destiny of indigenous people’s relocation did not end when Japanese colonisation did.

Indigenous people in Taiwan have faced rapid social change and continuous marginalisation since the mid-1950s, which was the end of Japanese colonisation and the beginning of the Kuomintang's (KMT) rule. Indigenous people began to leave their homes and reside in industrial cities during the economic transformation of Taiwan in the 1960s. They engaged in labour, and many young women were forced to enter prostitution (Yang 2012). Since the late 1980s, along with the trend of continuous marginalisation in Taiwan, indigenous people have sped up their migration to urban areas in search of opportunities for well-paid employment, better education and healthcare. Scholars point out that a massive outflow of population from traditional communities to urban areas may come at the price of the losing their native tongues and their unique Austronesian cultures for the next generation (Huang and Liu 2016).

In terms of the loss of traditional culture, the major driving force is still the assimilation policies that banned cultural practices from the Qing Dynasty until the current political regime. During the Qing Dynasty, the policy of the 'Cultivation of Mountain and Barbarians'<sup>8</sup> was carried out. During Japanese rule, the Governor-General of Taiwan launched a policy of aboriginal affairs (Riban 理番), including military repression, educational assimilation and The Kominka Movement,<sup>9</sup> in order to control indigenous people more efficiently. The KMT government then launched its policies by adapting the colonial style of Japanese governance, and tried to impose Chinese nationalism on indigenous groups. The 'Regulations Governing Life Improvement Movement for Highland Aborigines in Taiwan Province' (台灣省

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<sup>8</sup> After 1874, the Qing government started to develop indigenous areas and offered amnesty and enlistment to indigenous people who were against the government.

<sup>9</sup> (Japanese: 皇民化教育/こうみんかきょういく) During World War II, the Japanese government promoted the policy of Japanisation in order to assimilate the colonised peoples and get them to pledge loyalty to the Empire of Japan. Japanisation is the process in which Japanese culture dominates, assimilates or influences other cultures in general.



山地人民生活改進運動辦法), ‘Regulations Implementing Chinese Speaking for Highland Aborigines in Taiwan Province’ (臺灣省山地鄉國語推行辦法) and a hunting ban, carried out from the 1950s to the 1970s, were the policies that forced indigenous people to abandon their language and culture and limit their lifestyles. Moreover, both Japan’s Governor-General of Taiwan and the KMT government limited rituals to prevent indigenous people gathering and forming resistance. Some of the most crucial policies were the regulations on land use that stripped indigenes of their land rights.

Many difficult situations for indigenous people in Taiwan have been noted following these assimilation policies and attempts to erase their cultural practices. The literature discusses cultural loss, political and economic marginalisation, ecological problems such as pollution by nuclear waste, natural disasters, vulnerability to certain diseases and discrimination. Social problems such as educational disadvantage, unemployment, divorce and a displaced middle-aged population, which leads to the increasing importance of grandparents standing in for working parents, are all seen in aboriginal societies. These situations are often tightly linked to the use of alcohol (Li 1979; Li 1984; Huang and Liu 2016).

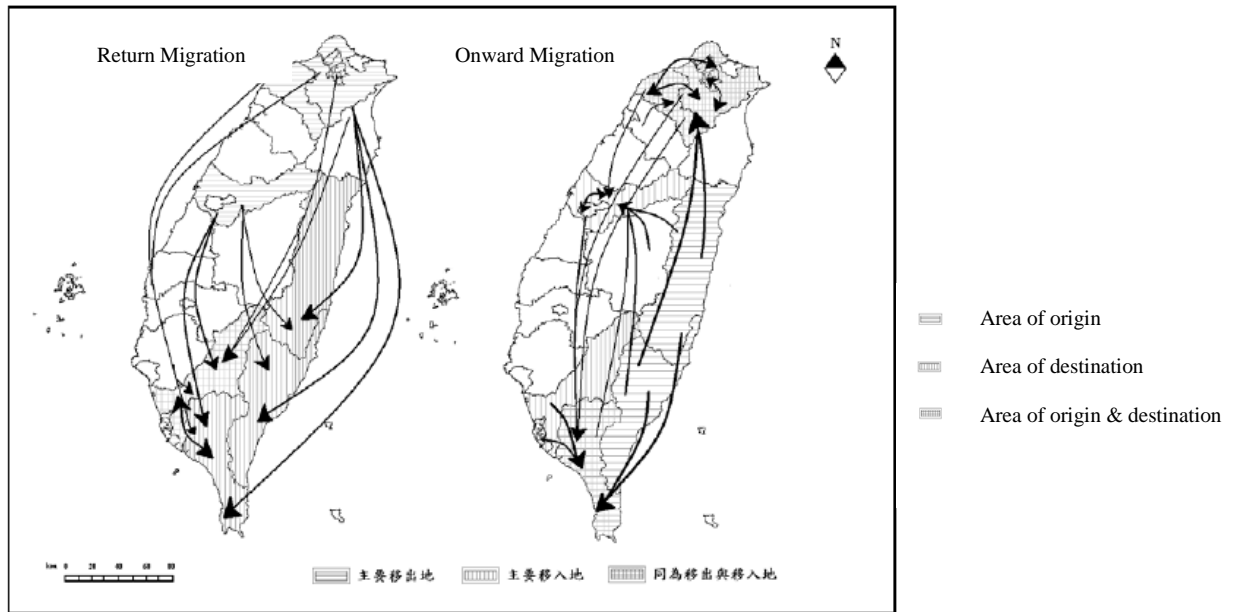


Figure 1.3 Spatial pattern of flows of repeat migrants for Taiwan indigenous people. This figure is adapted from Liu and Lin's (2008) research of indigenous populations' migration.

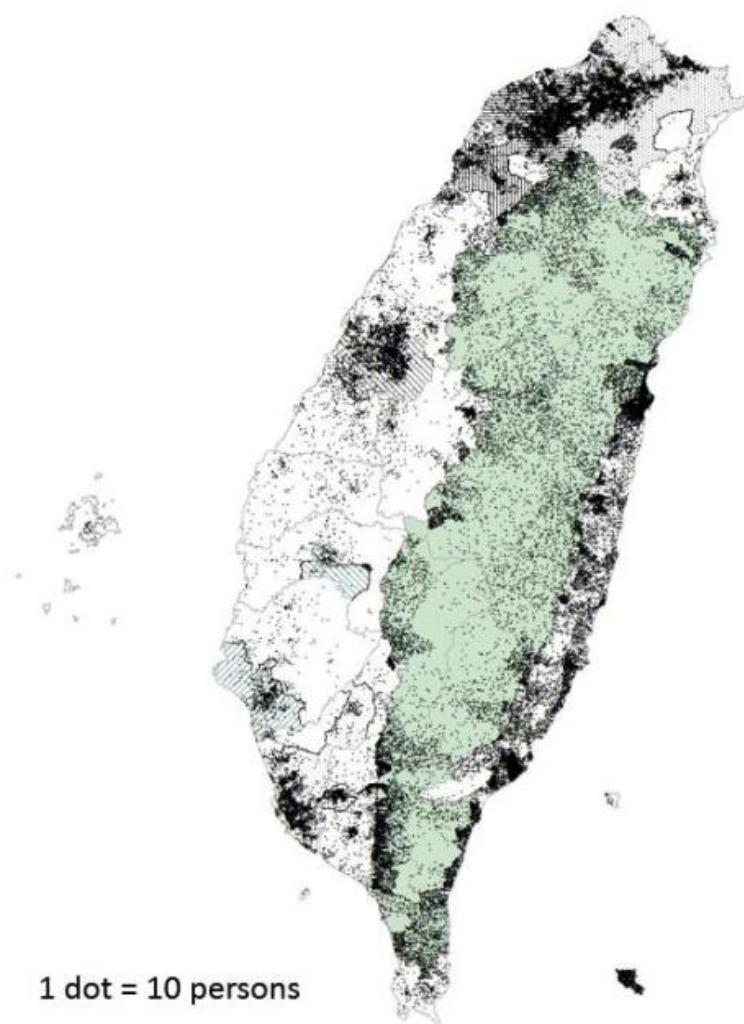


Figure 1.4 The population distribution of all Taiwan's indigenous people. (Date of Source: September 2016, CopyLeft (L) by TIPD, Academia Sinica. TIPD URL:<http://TIPD.sinica.edu.tw>)

### **1.2.3 Transitional justice for indigenous people in Taiwan**

Transitional justice for indigenous people is a globally adopted concept as, internationally, societies have slowly become aware of how indigenous nations have been mistreated and subjected to various violations (ICTJ 2013; Jung 2010; Balint, Evans, and McMillan 2014; Wu 2012). In recent years, the Taiwanese government has made extensive efforts to establish specific regulations regarding indigenous people's rights.

Indigenous peoples are amongst the most affected by systemic, structural abuses. Transitional justice measures offer some of the best means for their rights to be progressively taken into account. According to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, indigenous people have the right to be consulted and to give their consent. 'If states want to launch truth commissions, reparations programs, or other transitional justice programs dealing with affectations of indigenous peoples, they need to build those programs in consultation with indigenous peoples.' (ICTJ 2013)

Transitional justice for indigenous people has become a prominent issue in Taiwan since President Tsai Ing-wen apologised to indigenous peoples on behalf of the government on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2016. The Presidential Office Indigenous Historical Justice and Transitional Justice Committee was established afterwards. The tasks of the committee include collecting historical information regarding violations against indigenous peoples, drawing up plans to provide reparations or compensation for the deprivation of indigenous rights, reviewing the laws and policies that cause discrimination against indigenous peoples and putting forward amendment recommendations.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> See the tasks of the subcommittee on land matters under Presidential Office Indigenous Historical Justice and Transitional Justice Committee here: <https://indigenous-justice.president.gov.tw/EN> .

Although the Taiwanese government is addressing transitional justice, indigenous groups still condemn the government for failing to fulfil its promises. There were several conflicts between indigenous groups and government sectors during my fieldwork. One of these was the recent debate over the ‘Regulations on Land or Tribal Land Allocation for Indigenous People’ (原住民族土地或部落範圍土地劃設辦法), announced in 2017, which excluded private lands from traditional indigenous territories. The relocation plan, which demanded the eviction of the Ljvaek community, an urban indigenous settlement in Kaohsiung City, was another incident that opened the debate.<sup>11</sup> In July 2018, a few days before the harvest festival was held, traditional brewed millet wine was confiscated by the police in Taitung County because the winemaker, the leader of the Paiwan Tjarilik community, was questioned by police for privately making alcohol for sale in contravention of the Tobacco and Alcohol Administration Act (菸酒管理法). These examples represent the ever-present tension between indigenous rights of autonomy and the governance of the state.

Regarding the destiny of continuous oppression and marginalisation, indigenous elites have proposed more radical pathways, which are beyond the officially listed tasks of transitional justice, as the ideal development trajectory for Taiwanese indigenes. Huang and Liu (2016:309) summarise that ‘autonomous conservation’ and ‘participatory elevation’ are ‘two ideal-typical paths’ for indigenous people to establish quasi-national institutions such as ‘educational, judiciary, legislative, and

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<sup>11</sup> In 2018, indigenous residents of the Ljavek community, the oldest indigenous settlement in an urban area in Taiwan, were evicted by the police. The Ljavek residents are mostly Paiwan labour workers, who had been settled in Kaohsiung city since the 1950s but were said to be occupying state-owned land.

representative bodies’ to ensure indigenous languages and cultures can be well protected by ‘officially sanctioned legislation and education’. Through such state-to-state negotiations, indigenous people may be able to fight for their rights with mainstream society. However, there are still obstacles to achieving that ideal scenario because of complicated local contexts upon which the following chapters will elaborate.

#### **1.2.4 Anthropological reflections on indigenous alcohol use**

When people suggest drinking is part of indigenous culture, no matter what ‘drinking’ refers to, or if mental health is implied, the relationship between health/illness and culture demands our careful attention. Napier et al. (2014:1067) emphasise the need to take culture into account when thinking about health:

‘Although cultures often merge and change, human diversity assures that different lifestyles and beliefs will persist so that systems of value remain autonomous and distinct. In this sense, culture can be understood as not only habits and beliefs about perceived wellbeing, but also political, economic, legal, ethical, and moral practices and values.’

Trained as a psychiatrist in the Japanese colonial period, Rin’s (1957) narrative research on the Nan-shih Amis people was a special study conducted in clinical psychiatry but one which maintained the tradition of cultural psychiatry’s anthropological approach. In his conclusion, he states:

‘The alcoholism problems of Nan-shih Ami have a relation to its cultural change and its contact with the surroundings. Drinking rice wine by Nan-shih Ami has a

history at least since the start of acculturation[...].The drinking behaviour is determined by the social milieu and cultural patterns. Social factors prepare the ground, in cases of emotional crisis, for the excessive use of alcohol. This is especially true in the society which, in the course of cultural change, provides stress and strain. These, rather than the kind or amount of alcoholic beverage, are the important factors.'

Dr Hsien Rin (1957)

Dr Rin was not an ethnographer, there were only reported interview data without observation notes in his study. However, being a psychiatrist who had an insight into cultural psychiatry, Rin's reminder shows the cultural sensitivity in his mindset of approaching indigenous people's mental health issues. The problem is, it is still hard to place the notion of 'culture' properly. Littlewood (2001:1-14) held that the 'double-edge' meaning of culture leads to culture becoming the proxy of 'difference'. Through such mechanisms, the political relationships between the settler and natives may be ignored. There is a need to consult cross-disciplinary work to figure out the ontology and epistemology of alcohol use among indigenous people, particularly from anthropological viewpoints. Also, drinking patterns that may be seen as problematic and pathological in each cultural context need to be carefully distinguished.

Various anthropological accounts have dealt with issues and problems of alcohol consumption in different ethnic communities and cultures (Levy and Kunitz 1974; Douglas 1987; Heath 1987; Gusfield 1996; Helman 2007:196-223; Dietler 2006).According to Australian sociologist Robin Room (2001:189), 'if bad behaviour is a foreseeable consequence of drinking, why do some societies nevertheless not hold the drinker responsible?' He goes on to argue that profession-based interventions often fail to understand the values of the local 'ground', and that intervention

programmes or policies should be organised based on socio-cultural variation (Room 2016). Indeed, the practice of drinking varies in different social and cultural contexts. Marshall (1979) argues the need for ethnographic understandings of the diverse normal drinking styles in different social settings before attempting to deal with addiction. Thus, it is necessary to learn about local values and ways of drinking, including the idea of indigenous drinking cultures, no matter whether for ceremonial or recreational purposes.

Medical anthropologist Merrill Singer (1986: 2001) points out the importance of raising political-economic awareness of such issues. We cannot be so naïve as to imagine there could be an exotic drinking culture without also appreciating how indigenous practices of drinking are interwoven with wider political contexts. Hunt and Barker (2001) propose a more theoretically driven macro analysis. This is a more insightful and integrated model, integrating social and cultural meanings, specific value judgments of different groups, joint examinations of production, distribution and consumption and power relations among substance users.

Plenty of anthropological researchers echo Hunt and Baker's proposal. Challenging conventional attitudes to drunkenness based on moral judgment or conscience, MacAndrew and Edgerton (2003) analyse examples from around the world and argue that the way people get drunk is determined by what their societies are made of. Their work argues for the need to understand the social contexts of drunkenness, since even the most chaotic expressions of human consciousness may come from a rational mind and a specific social order. Their suggestions have implications for drinking as socially or culturally constructed.

On the other hand, one should also approach local drinking from a global perspective. Since the global mental health (GMH) movement was launched in 2007



to improve services for people with mental health problems living in areas where such services are scarce (Patel et al. 2011; Prince 2008), there have been anthropological critiques demanding an examination of the authoritative status of knowledge and evidence, as well as offering ways to improve interventions (Kohrt, Mendenhall, and Brown 2015). In fact, considering mental health as a basic human right, it is also challenging to find a position for ‘culture’ regarding the marginalisation and vulnerability of indigenous peoples.

Studies have indicated the contradictions between treatment models and local contexts, rendering the failure or alteration of therapeutic modalities under changing social economic-political structures (Garcia 2010; Garriott and Raikhel 2015; Raikhel 2016), and my preliminary study echoes such discussions (Wu 2019). Anthropologists point out that substance use is often the result of racism, poverty, or structural oppression imposed on people, while also unpacking the underlying meanings behind addiction from cultural, political and gender perspectives. While these often shape subjectivities, the agency of substance users is often ignored (Bourgois 2003; Gamburd 2008; Pine 2008).

From an anthropological viewpoint, addiction, whether to drugs, alcohol or any other substance, cannot be merely viewed as a pathological behaviour. Substance use is far more complicated than that, for historical and cultural reasons. For example, alcohol is arguably one of the most popular ‘drug foods’ in human history. ‘Drug foods’ is a term coined by Mintz (1985) to indicate psychotropic foods distributed across a global marketplace as an intrinsic part of colonialism. Drug foods were introduced to colonised areas through European economic expansion, and were especially tied to control over labour-power (Bradburd and Jankowiak 2003).

However, the epistemological legacies of these drug foods require further exploration. Instead of linking them solely to European imperialism, what role do these drug foods play in indigenous societies during the post-colonial era in a region such as East Asia or a nation such as settler-colonial Taiwan? For what reasons do indigenous people keep using alcohol when they are no longer slave labourers? These interrogations then become the statement of the problem in this thesis: the difficulty in defining indigenous people's drinking practices in Taiwan stems from the symbolic violence of colonial power, as well as reflecting a gesture to establish autonomy and resistance. This renders public health narratives on alcohol use inadequate, missing what should be their true focus, unable to make a significant positive difference to the lives of those they purport to address.

Finally, there is a need to rethink the tradition of drinking practices. Since indigenous people's drinking practices have altered through time, the authenticity of the drinking culture may be questioned. Lock and Farquhar (2007:187-192) introduce the notion of 'denaturalization' in order to highlight the structural powers superimposed on everyday life that bodies live within. Thereby, anthropologists may be able to challenge bourgeois common sense ideas about the nature of body and those 'unnatural bodily situations' by understanding embodied practices in present-day societies. The authenticity of indigenous drinking practices may be questioned through outsiders' middle-class, Chinese Han-focused bourgeois lens. In this sense, my study aims to challenge perceptions of indigenous people's contemporary drinking practices that have hitherto been seen as unnatural.

### **1.3 Theorising drinking practices**

This study was inspired by practice theories to look at habitus in the field, the structure/social order embodied within human practices, the play of power in social life and, on a larger scale, history and culture. I list them in detail as follows.

#### **1.3.1 Practice theories**

As I previously mentioned, indigenous people's values of drinking refer to the various meanings of its practice. The values they create for themselves reflect how they deal with their everyday situations. Inspired by Atayal weaving culture, which represents the collective ethnic identity of the Atayal (Yoshimura and Wall 2014), I found that Atayal's weaving coincidentally matches Bourdieu's (1977) central idea of 'habitus' and 'practice'. In fact, by knitting specific colours and patterns into their textiles, Atayal's weaving entwines their values in life and their story of migration with their art. Bourdieu's practice theory, which refers to the physical embodiment of cultural capital in the firmly embedded habits, skills and dispositions in our life experiences, gives us the possibility of exploring a social world by analysing structures embodied within human practices to capture the human body's internalisation of the social order.

Numerous anthropologists have researched substance use with a Bourdieusian approach. One of the most representative works is Bourgois's (2003) research on the dealing of crack cocaine in New York. This adapts the analytic framework of cultural production theory and aims to 'restore the agency of culture, the autonomy of individuals, and the centrality of gender and the domestic sphere to a political-economic understanding of the experience of persistent poverty and social marginalization in the urban United States' (ibid. 12). In a study of suicide in Sri

Lanka, Widger (2015) applies Bourdieu's (1990) concept of 'practice' as a theory of socialisation to see how societal, historical or cultural factors affect mental health, and also explores how alcohol use is related to migration and masculinity. In a study of daily relationships and routines of urban Hondurans, Pine (2008) likewise understands drinking through the Bourdieusian sense of practice, specifically considering local identities and subjectivities under the regime of neoliberalism. She points out how violence is normalised through embodied processes. These ethnographic works subject drinking practices to analysis within a broader framework to stress the power relationships and dynamics in such societies. As Ortner (2006) has described, the purpose of practice theory is to explain the relationship between human actions, and even some global entity which we call 'the system'. She further argues that practice theory should be based on concerns including the play of power in social life, a larger scale of historical analysis and culture in the context of social transformation.

Now the question is this: what are the specific things that the researcher should look at? As I will shortly explore in greater detail, indigenous people are no longer living within limited spaces (if they ever were) but are moving both frequently and distantly instead. Accordingly, their drinking practices are affected. Moving is an essential daily practice in indigenous life. Take Atayal people, for example. As an ethnic group who live by shifting agriculture, the Atayal have a rich history of migration which is represented in their lives and art. It is generally believed that, by using specific colours and patterns, Atayal women weave their cosmology and stories of migration into their traditional textile designs (Figure 1. 5 & Figure 1. 6). In my study, I metaphorically use my ethnographic writing to connect all the vignettes related to drinking, which encompasses Taiwanese pan-indigenous groups' lived experience on the move. The meanings of drinking practices emerge through all sorts

of embodied movement and expression, as well as inter-ethnic encounters. By tracing indigenous people's trajectories of migration and various scenarios of confrontation, we will be able to unpack the complex intersectionality of different substance, medical and health issues surrounding the entangled meanings of drinking.



Figure 1. 5 Atayal loom made of wood, with a piece of unfinished woven ramie textile attached.  
(British Museum Collection Online ©Trustees of the British Museum)



Figure 1. 6 An Atayal woman in Wufeng practices weaving, passing down her culture.

### 1.3.2 Cultural values and everyday morality

Cultural values have been taken as risk or protective factors for problematic alcohol and substance uses in worldwide contexts. Although Douglas (1987:3-15) identifies drinking as the 'construction of an ideal world' while providing an

anthropologist's distinctive perspective on drinking, she points out that different approaches to the relation between culture and alcohol carry very different moral and academic intentions. By reviewing early anthropological studies of alcohol use, Heath (1987:16-70) finds that 'even practitioners of the so-called "hard sciences" acknowledge that social and cultural factors must be taken into account', and those 'values, attitudes, and other norms constitute important sociocultural factors that influence the effect of drinking.' Sociologists also find social, cultural and societal reactions to the drinker are important both in shaping drinking practices and their effects (Room 2013). However, to understand why medical interventions in indigenous people's drinking are often invalid, we require a dialectal understanding of both 'culture' and 'values'.

According to Clifford's (2001, 2013) indigenous articulations theory, contemporary indigenous people are living in an interconnected world, which has been involved in a broad range of political, social, economic and cultural connections/disconnections. We cannot imagine how indigenous people think of themselves merely based on their self-understanding of traditional cultures because 'indigeneity' has today been registered as a more complicated reality.

Sociologist Gusfield (1996) indicates the contested meaning of drinking. He points out that the meanings of drinking, for example deviance or pathology, are historically constructed. He also proposes an alternative angle from which to view social problems. Whether or not we consider drinking a problem, one must take cultural authority into account, but neither culture nor its 'authority' are fixed. Nowadays, indigenous people live in an even more difficult and dangerous situation. Their lifestyles may be altered by adapting to changing environmental and social pressures. As Lockwood (2004) indicates, Pacific Islanders experience cultural

change due to a series of influences, such as global capital, extraction of natural resources and global tourism. She also notes that globalisation even impacts on indigenous people's population mobility, environments (which could be vulnerable to climate change), religions and identities. As for health delivery strategy, if we take diabetes in North America for instance, instead of overstating the importance of cultural attitudes about health, Joe and Young (1993) see diabetes among indigenous people as a disease of civilisation that shapes the diet culture.

While accepting the conviction that drinking behaviour is culturally constructed, we should bear in mind that, in a rapidly changing, imbalanced, developing world, 'culture' can no longer be seen as reflecting aspects of cultural relativism or functionalism. Hunt and Barker (2001:175) write that 'recent theoretical developments in anthropology have attempted to push the focus away from closed, static, taken-for-granted functionalist social systems and cultural orders into open, fluid, emergent relationships based on understanding access to, control over and manipulation of power in relationships.' There is no need to abandon the notion of culture, but we may need to find a better approach and one which is even more relevant to my research questions. Why do people drink in this or that way? What are their purposes? What do they gain? Are they healing pain or searching for pleasure? Why do they still affirm that drinking is part of their culture when it is risky and threatens their health?

Although there is always a call for 'cultural competency' to 'improve the cultural responsiveness, appropriateness and effectiveness of clinical services' (Kirmayer 2012; Dein and Bhui 2013), more effort is needed to unfold the opaque meanings of culture. Moreover, this study also aims to consult advocates for structural competency and increased awareness of structural forces by recognising 'the web of interpersonal

networks, environmental factors and political/socioeconomic forces that surround clinical encounters' (Metzl and Hansen 2014).

My study eschews looking at culture from a functionalist perspective. In contrast to the notion of culture, philosophers and anthropologists have raised the need to establish a view through which to see the meanings and values embedded within human beings' lived experience (Schroeder 2016; Robbins and Sommerschuh 2016). For example, Munn's (1992) ethnography shows how people create values through a series of intrasocietal practices. The notion of value then has been stressed by academics to theorise a way to think about health. One such example is Napier et al.'s (2014) interpretation of culture as people's dynamic and changing 'system of value'. This argues that culture should be understood as 'not only habits and beliefs about perceived wellbeing, but also political, economic, legal, ethical, and moral practices and values' (ibid.). Thus, this study looks into the local moral worlds which are reflected in drinking practices.

As for local sociality and morality, taking Wufeng as an example, it was previously believed that the Atayal social organisation was determined by its traditional constraint, *Gaga*.<sup>12</sup> However, some argue that Christianity plays an even more critical role in the local ethic. It is not easy to make a general statement by simply pointing out *Gaga* or religious doctrine to illustrate Wufeng people's moral world. Das (2012) indicates that we may be able to find the presence of moral and ethical formations within every day habitual acts. Likewise, Kleinman and Hall-Clifford (2009) suggest understanding stigma and stigmatised individuals as embedded in local moral experience, rather than over-emphasising an individual's psychological status. This derives from Goffman's (1963) argument for stigma as a

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<sup>12</sup> '*Gaga*' is the traditional ethnic knowledge including the social constraint of the Atayal people. See more details in Chapter 5.1.



process based on the social construction of identity. My study echoes these arguments, indicating that indigenous people's alcohol use cannot be seen as individual pathological behaviour, but should be understood through its everyday practice within a historically determined, culturally shaped and politically constructed moral world.

### **1.3.3 Drinking and Ritual**

Alcohol use is commonly used in the indigenous rituals, and the act of drinking is identified as a ritual, too (Douglas 1987; Gusfield 1987). However, it is not enough to merely explain the function of drinking during the process of the rituals; more importantly, the social meaning of ceremonial drinking practices should be investigated.

One of the most important theories about ritual is Victor Turner's (1990) notion of 'social drama' that refers to the specific pattern of social processes. For Turner, the rituals illuminate two concepts: liminality and reflexivity. Liminality means a doorway as the symbol of transformation. The concept has been used to describe the theme of change, as well as those 'ambiguous, fluid, and malleable moments or situations', while ritual also produces an image about which a group can generate an insightful reflection (Stephenson 2015:50-52). In this sense, ritual then becomes the medium that serves for negotiation of the social values related to identity, religious belief or political power.

Alcohol is a symbolic medium which is commonly used in human activities, especially in festivities or rituals. In fact, alcohol often plays a crucial role to ensure the rituals function based on its biopharmacological functions. Since alcohol can alter consciousness, it has become the fundamental medium by which participants in rituals enter a liminal state (Rudgley 1993). To understand the function of alcohol use during the rituals is crucial, but it is never easy to differentiate the sacred and secular use of

alcohol since rituals, as stressed previously, have liminal and reflective social meanings. Scholars (MacAndrew and Edgerton 2003; Gusfield 1987) adapt the notion of cultural chemistry and argue that carnivals and festivals are not just held for fun but drinking may be encouraged as sort of 'cultural remission' as part of the conventionalised relaxation of social constraints (SIRC 1998). As Douglas (1987) indicates, drinking is 'the construction of an ideal world,' and alcohol itself can be a mirror that reflects people's projection of their situations and hopes. In a time of change, rituals change too. There are rituals practised in the old ways, but also newly established ceremonies, or as Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) call them, 'the invented traditions', which can be seen in modern rituals that emerge from indigenous communities by inventing new ways of drinking with new ingredients and recipe. In a way, we may be able to analyse societal changes by looking into the alternations of the rituals. Also, we can see more subtle dialectal relationships between sacred and secular meanings of alcohol use by looking into both ceremonial activities and everyday life.

Finally, in the time of change, the rituals should be treated not only in their forms but furthermore in their own rights, which reveal their interior self-organisation and complexity (Handelman 2005). Kapferer (2005) points out the need for a closer look at the dynamic qualities of the rituals, as they show more subtle symbolic meanings, reflexivity and representation. These arguments provide a theoretical ground to analyse the rituals related to drinking, as well as when drinking is treated as ritual practice.

### **1.3.4 Drinking and Tourism**

Tourism also affects cultural values. Since indigenous groups have been marginalised and become vulnerable minorities in terms of social-economic status, many have developed tourist enterprises to ensure their livelihood. For some indigenous communities, tourism has become the main factor reshaping their everyday life practices. Indigenous people's living styles have also changed with time, which means the authenticity of cultural practices has been altered. In this research, I ask how the values of drinking are loosened or transformed along with changing rituals and everyday life. Are the sacred meanings of alcohol preserved in the new ceremonies? Have any new meanings of drinking emerged in modern times?

Chambers (2000:98) indicates that 'local prejudices' may prevail when we think of authenticity, and that may be why indigenous people's 'drinking culture' has been taken for granted without careful review. Inspired by Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical studies, Nuñez and Lett (1989:271) point out that tourists and their hosts are always on stage in every encounter, that researchers must 'attempt to find his way backstage as well as view the performance from the audience.' Likewise, MacCannell (1999:91-107) uses the concept of 'staged authenticity' to point out local people's presentation to the tourists in order to hide their everyday life. However, unlike MacCannell's Marxist critiques of the realness of the culture, what concerns Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) is the agency and deliberateness when they consider the invention of traditions, which can be seen in the endless list of tourist practices. Finally, a crucial aspect related to tourism that has been raised by scholars is the dimension of power (Church and Coles 2007; Hall 2007a, 2007b), which needs further understanding in respect to the socio-cultural context. Tourism of course

impacts tradition, but one must investigate the dialectal meanings of those drinking practices both on and off the stage in the age of change.

### **1.3.5 Structural violence and agency**

Similar to Brady's (2004) study of indigenous Australia, which found there was no word for 'health' in the Aboriginal languages, in my preliminary study I concluded that invalid health interventions targeting indigenous people's alcohol consumption may be due to the gap between local people's and mainstream society's concept of health (Wu 2019). However, this thesis would overthrow such an argument, since I found that indigenous people are aware of the health risks of drinking. Indigenous people are already aware of the effects of drinking and have been repeatedly warned by medical professionals about the risks.

According to neurobiological theory, alcohol use depresses brain function by altering the balance between inhibitory and excitatory neurotransmission (Valenzuela 1997). Such paradoxical neurological effects have made it difficult to ascribe simple meanings to drinking, since there may be a two-sided purpose between pleasure-seeking and self-harming. For example, it is hard to offer a simplistic meaning of drinking in the occasion of a desperate person singing in karaoke without knowing the background to his/her performance. Any reductive definition or opinionated standpoint may limit a holistic understanding of indigenous people's drinking. It is a knee-jerk reaction for a clinical doctor to attribute the desire to drink to pain. A common Chinese idiom, *'jie jiu jiao chou'* (借酒澆愁), which means 'drowning one's sorrows by drinking' explains most of such self-medicating behaviour. However, what is the origin of this pain? Is drinking merely an individual's coping strategy to paralyse depression with this specific neuroinhibitory effect?

Anthropologists have tried to relocate their focus in a rapidly changing world and medical anthropologists have switched their gaze to social suffering (Kleinman, Das, and Lock 1997) and structural violence (Farmer 2002; 2009). More recently, Wilkinson and Kleinman (2016) put forward the notion of an individual's suffering as a manifestation of social structural oppression, which is wrought by processes of industrialisation and the rise of the modern urban experience. This statement properly reflects Taiwanese indigenous people's current life situations of migration and living in a metropolitan world. Taiwanese sociologist Tsai (2007) also tries to explain the social origin of the 'mental frustration' of Tao people in Orchid Island by using the notion of social suffering. However, as Bourgois (2003:17) reminds us, 'a focus on structures often obscures the fact that humans are active agents of their history, rather than passive victims.' There is always ambivalence between stressing victimhood and indicating agency under pressure of any kind.

Social scientists, particularly medical anthropologists, frequently use the term 'structural violence' to describe the relationship between social inequality and health situations (Farmer 2002; 2009). These arguments are important since they highlight that poor social conditions may limit an individual's opportunities and capabilities. However, in important report on culture and health, Napier et al. (2014:1623) write that 'People's everyday lives and the restrictions on their decision making are, in part, shaped for them by external and internal structures.' They conclude there is a need for a closer look at those hidden structures, such as 'caste, class, status, sex, ethnic group, age, and gender preference' (ibid.).

There are now, however, calls to avoid the pessimism of the discourses of suffering and violence. Since the 1980s, ethnographic works that Ortner (2016) calls 'dark anthropology' have focused on people living in neoliberal regimes, taking power,

inequality, domination and exploitation into account. Robbins (2013:457) argues this has led to the neglect of how people ‘strive to create the good in their lives’ beyond suffering. By adapting Robbins’ (ibid.) ‘anthropology of the good’ theory and Das’s (2012) statement on moral and ethical formations in everyday life, Ortner (2016) suggests we go further, to an ‘anthropology of resistance’, as new directions in the anthropology of critique, resistance and activism. These arguments remind us to discover those ‘good’ aspects, like positive values and motivations within sufferers, even when small, or the term that we call ‘agency’.

## **1.4 Towards a self-reflective approach**

### **1.4.1 Professional no more**

Owing to my experience of the unsuccessful health intervention in Wufeng, I take self-reflective research positionality as central to this study. It was my experience of displacement that triggered my journey. Those ‘Why me? Why now?’ questions patients may often have regarding their illnesses (Helman 2007a) can also be the basis for a professional’s self-reflection.

I still remember how, when I was taking part in one moderate drinking project during my time as a medical doctor in Wufeng, I was invited by a local nurse to give a talk about drinking issues to the villagers. After the talk, a woman told me that she would like to thank me for the hospital providing such a project to help villagers cut down their drinking. Afterwards, I realised that the woman must have read a newspaper clipping, which was a report of the hospital’s project based on a make-believe story. This was totally different from what I understood since the outcome of the intervention was limited. Following that frustrating experience, I conducted a three-year-long study to explore why the intervention was invalid. As a

medical doctor's self-reflection over his 'displacement', I concluded, 'For the *jiejiu* (moderate drinking) project (see Chapter 1.1.3), health inequality is neither diminished by enhancing the accessibility of medical resources nor by increasing the number of job placements. Health interventions become useless attempts when designed under the mindset of scientific modernists. [...] This study suggests decolonizing and reframing work on indigenous drinking culture to investigate and redefine the ontology of drinking practice under its complicated context in the contemporary world.' (Wu 2019:237)

Although I found myself to be 'useless' (ibid. 236), the experience of engagement with the local people allowed me to build trusting relationships with them. However, this was not just because I have spent time in the field, but through showing my honesty and frankness by admitting my uselessness. I borrow the concept of 'tall poppy syndrome'<sup>13</sup> to explain Wufeng people's unwillingness to change their lifestyles, and becoming an untypical doctor who does not always advise people not to drink creates the possibility of trustworthiness.

Many anthropologists describe their experiences of being accepted into local societies as rites of passage. One of the most famous examples is Clifford Geertz's account of running away from a cockfighting venue with other Balinese people, while being chased by the police. This 'led to a sudden and unusually complete acceptance into a society extremely difficult for outsiders to penetrate' (Geertz 1972:4). In this study, there was no magical rite of passage for me to be suddenly accepted by the people in the field. Nevertheless, withdrawing from my professional identity through continuous self-reflection created a passage to 'right', namely rightness, which means correctness. In my case, although people I met during

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<sup>13</sup> It was mentioned by David McKnight (2002) that Australian indigenous people seeking change can be disliked in their communities.

fieldwork still saw me as Dr Wu, I was no longer a professional expert coming to the village to impose medical knowledge and threaten people with graphic pictures of deteriorated human organs or malformed fetuses. On the contrary, I took the health narratives of alcohol use applied to indigenous people as my starting point and saw how health-centred discourses were perceived and reacted to by those same people. In this sense, I was looking for what was morally good, acceptable or justified, from emic perspective. This study aims to point out the drinking practices' positive values that serve the collective interests, while drinking may be reckoned as detrimental at the individual level. Moreover, I pushed the discussion beyond what had been repeatedly stressed by medical practitioners, pointing out the rights that indigenous people are craving. This thesis does not propose any appropriate ways to drink or not to drink but focuses on those moral or legal entitlements for indigenous people in terms of rights.

#### **1.4.2 'You should write it conversely!'**

I once visited an Atayal community on Christmas Sunday and was invited to attend their Christmas Joint Service which was held by the local churches in Jienshe Township. Many pastors gathered on that day, and it is known that many of those priests from the Presbyterian Church are tribal intellectual elites who had taken part in indigenous rights movements for decades. When I was introduced to them as a researcher studying alcohol, they said 'Please write your thesis conversely', meaning not to reverse the roles of cause and effect. They had already seen so many studies that attached and reinforced the stigma of moral defects onto the people. One pastor did say the following to me jokingly, however: 'But, if you want to have a drink, call me anytime!'



A similar scenario occurred when I attended the Central Advisory Council Meeting in The Council of Indigenous Peoples. The Central Advisory Council was established under the principle of the right to be consulted which is listed in The Indigenous Peoples Basic Law. To conduct research related to issues of indigenous people in Taiwan, I had to present my research plan to the representatives of each ethnic group on the Central Advisory Council Meeting held by The Council of Indigenous Peoples. There are 17 indigenous ethnic groups in Taiwan and 12 representatives attended the meeting.

Before the meeting, I received the documentary review report, which suggested not to use the word 'alcoholic' in the research proposal, in case it generated a sense of stigma; this showed how sensitive drinking issues are among indigenous groups. During the Central Advisory Council meeting, each representative gave their opinions and suggestions for the research. The way the representatives perceived culture differed in the meeting. One of the representatives reminded me of 'cultural sensitivity' to avoid the stigma that may be generated. Another one suggested that I 'translate' the drinking culture from a negative stereotype to one with positive value. One of them even suggested I pay attention to indigenous people's special 'gene' which creates a special physical condition for alcohol consumption: 'That is why we can have a good drinking culture!'

Another interesting aspect was that each representative had some stereotype of other ethnic groups. They suggested I research a specific ethnic group because 'they drink the most', but of course, such opinions were opposed by other representatives. These representatives seldom have opportunities to come together unless there is an important issue to be discussed. After I explained the purpose of the study as both a way to reflect on previous health interventions and to encourage destigmatisation, the

representatives were relieved. The meeting ended in a relaxed atmosphere and, finally, all 12 representatives voted to agree that my study could proceed.

In fact, during the meeting, there was a time slot during which I had to stay outside the meeting room to wait for the final decision of approval. An official from the Council of Indigenous Peoples came to meet me and handed me a booklet, named 'The Abstinence Guidance Book for Indigenous People', which was edited by a Christian organisation. Knowing that there was a meeting on drinking issues that day, she came to meet me for a special purpose since one of her family members had a drinking problem: 'We made every effort to help him but in vain. Maybe we can cooperate and do something in the future.'

During my fieldwork, I repeatedly received 'instructions' to write up in this way or that way. This reflects the tension between the indigenous peoples and the researcher, who sometimes may be taken as a proxy of someone who holds power of any kind. This experience reveals the sensitivity among the indigenous groups that grows during long periods of colonisation and deprivation. Should I take those suggestions to write up 'conversely'? This was a dilemma at the beginning of my research. After all, over-stressing indigenous people's victimhood may also generate another bias that blinds us to indigenous people's subjectivities.

### **1.4.3 Intersubjectivity**

To know a group of people's collective subjectivity, we seek to understand the cultural values they hold. Geertz (1975) uses the notion of 'common sense' to describe the cultural system. Not like those preoccupied thoughts of universal truths that we may have, Geertz indicates that common sense refers to the body of knowledge which has been evaluated through time and reorganised to reflect

changing cultural values. In other words, common sense is generated dynamically. The point is, Taiwanese indigenous people's 'common sense' is characterised through rapid social change and frequent encounters with other groups of people.

Human beings are influenced by others. This 'Other' can be a family member, a neighbour, a group of people or a regime. In their psychoanalytic theory of a phenomenological approach to the position of 'self', Atwood and Stolorow (2014) introduce the term 'intersubjectivity', claiming that mutually influencing patient/analyst or child/parent interactions must be considered contextually. Tracing the discourse of human relations, the notion of 'intersubjectivity' was first proposed by phenomenologist Husserl (1960) and Merleau-Ponty (1962) to define the concept of empathy and the experience of Otherness. Following Husserl's theory, anthropologist Duranti (2010) suggests that the idea of intersubjectivity should be an 'umbrella notion' for anthropology as a way to think of the possibility of human interaction and human understanding, particularly in experiences of encounters. In Munn's research on the value creation in Gawan society, she also uses the term *intersubjective* to 'characterise the social spacetime formed in practices' and points out that 'agents not only engage in action but are also acted upon by the action' (Munn 1992:14). In my study, I take intersubjectivity as a theoretical framework to reflect on my concern of self-other relations as for 'thinking about the ways in which humans interpret, organize, and reproduce particular forms of social life and social cognition' (Duranti 2010:17).

Given my experience as a returning researcher, one going back for fieldwork with a different role, I cannot be so naïve as to expect to 'go native' in the field. What standpoint should a researcher take given that their research will almost inevitably represent an imbalanced power relationship? In Geertz's example of cockfighting, we

can think of how positioning himself as an insider meant the local people trusted him in a normal manner. There should be something more subtle and essential than Geertz himself saying that ‘In Bali, to be teased is to be accepted.’ What is the psychological mechanism of teasing a stranger, as well as being teased without feeling humiliated? The point is, for the Balinese, Geertz is not just a stranger but a white Westerner who could represent colonial power.

During my preliminary fieldwork, many informants regarded me only as a doctor or a health supervisor. A doctor is not only a professional but even a proxy of the medical institution and, sometimes, medical doctors are regarded as a proxy of the state. In my case, a turning point in establishing rapport came by avoiding admonishing people but showing humility towards local culture and ways of life.

However, I am not suggesting we should affectedly pretend to be curious about an exotic culture. Here, I mean being insightful about the power relationships which cannot be diminished. I, as a medical doctor, like all health professionals and medical practitioners, may have the ‘common sense’ as a rational standard to interpret what drinking really means. The Western medical knowledge that stresses the right way to live a good life has been continuously imposed on indigenous people through medical practitioners. How do their practices affect indigenous people? How are these psychoeducations received in indigenous communities? These questions necessitate looking at the actors that try to intervene in indigenous people’s lives.

Anthropologists propose ‘self as subject’ as an ethnographic category:

‘In using the portraits of other cultural patterns to reflect self-critically on our own ways, anthropology disrupts common sense and makes us re-examine our taken-for-granted assumptions’.

In this sense, I would suspend taking those presumptions for granted (including those scientific hypotheses and epidemiological statistic data which become the background knowledge for health intervention policies, and all those cultural stereotypes) and start to ask what really happens to indigenous people. In this sense, the ‘self’ would be broad and various in its meaning. That is why there should be a lot of ‘I/me’s throughout the following chapters, since I use this approach to reflect on drinking practices that relate to all kinds of power relationships.

## **1.5 Thesis outline**

Following this introductory chapter, Chapter 2 introduces the theoretical base and research methods used in this thesis, as well its positionality and ethical concerns. As a self-reflective ethnographer, I adapt Bourdieusian practice theory and use multi-sited fieldwork to capture the meaning of drinking practices under the circumstances of displacement. As a medical anthropologist with the dual role of physician and researcher who looks at shifting drinking cultures among indigenous people, this study focuses on everyday morality under current structural violence from an intersubjective perspective. Finally, I stress the ethical concerns that highlight the present complexities in indigenous rights.

In Chapter 3, I review cross-disciplinary research (including epidemiology, cultural psychiatry, public health and the social sciences) relating to indigenous people’s drinking ‘problems’ and offer anthropological reflections. Then, by introducing the *jiejiu* projects, I question the current governance of indigenous people’s alcohol use which is based on the mindset of improving health. Later, I

analyse interviews with indigenous practitioners and explore the current situation of health interventions. The final part of this chapter describes the Culture and Health Station. I will discuss the conundrum of appropriating the concept of ‘culture’ for use in health care.

Chapter 4 raises the issue of stereotypes and stigma. First, I describe how stereotypes are delivered through the media and popular indigenous jokes and songs related to the theme of alcohol. I then discuss the common phenomena of ‘street heroes’ and the Atayal people’s moral world. The dynamic moral values of indigenous groups result in different standards while facing the stigma of drinking, either on an individual or collective level. Finally, I mention the indigenous elites’ collective sentiment of blame as resistance to current health narratives.

Chapter 5 sheds light on the dialectical relationship between the sacred and the secular aspects of alcohol use among indigenous people today. First, I introduce the traditional cosmology of Atayal people and how alcohol functioned in their cultural practices. Then, I discuss the current religious world of Atayal people, how ‘culture’ has been reshaped and negotiated in the contemporary world and how it relates to their sociality. I introduce the modern rituals of Saisiyat and Atayal people in Wufeng and offer my opinions on the changes they have undergone. I also use the Amis ritual in Makotaay to discuss how Makotaay villagers have attempted to reverse the negative meaning of rice wine. Furthermore, I consider the symbolic meaning of impure millet wine in the days of social change, foreshadowing the theme of the next chapter: how drinking practices have been altered by structural violence.

Chapter 6 describes the relationship between drinking and dispossession under the ‘party-state capitalism’ regime, mainly focused on post-WWII. Indigenous people’s drinking patterns reflect the structural violence that underpins both

individual daily stresses and more collective forms of suffering. The chapter starts from the incident of the eviction of vendors in Wufeng that underscores how a party-state capitalist regime affects the lives of indigenous people. Next is the land issue, in which I introduce indigenous groups' recent demonstration on the traditional indigenous territories. I discuss anecdotal cases of life-threatening crises encountered during fieldwork to explore everyday suffering related to land deprivation. Later, I use the term 'intoxicated diaspora' to describe urban indigenous people's life situations in the days of displacement. Then, I describe Orchid Island, where drinking issues are primarily related to development and tourism. Overall, this chapter indicates that drinking is social suffering under structural circumstance. However, drinking can also be practised as self-fashioning that represents a trend of self-recognition and identity emerging from the specific contexts of indigenous people's life-worlds.

Chapter 7 introduces indigenous people's struggles to survive their marginalised lives. I use the term 'symbolic sobriety' to indicate indigenous people's attempts to defy the stigmatised self. However, I must stress that the sobriety implied here does not refer to a neuropsychological reality but a symbolic one. I introduce the Aboriginal Victory Association and the Kalibuan *buluo* to describe how vulnerable minorities transform the stigma into the actions of abstinence. Urban indigenous groups live in sobriety by re-organising their communities. Indigenous people's everyday resilience exists in post-disaster rehabilitation, cooperative community movements and volunteer education. This shows that indigenous people are aware of the detrimental effects of alcohol but instead find ways of bypassing the health narratives. In closing this chapter, I describe the establishment of the tribal councils as indicative of the current state of indigenous self-determination.

The final chapter starts by rethinking authentic indigeneity regarding drinking. I argue that drinking practices currently represent not only indigenous people's displaced roots but also their routes for emplacement, which can be a gesture to rebuild sociality and demonstrate sociability. Later on, I explain how contemporary drinking practices straddle controversial but entangled values such as to drink or not to drink, good and evil, sacred and secular, and other emotional and moral attitudes. These contradictory values are superimposed on each other. The ambiguities in between reflect indigenous people's sense of collective destiny as oppressed and marginalised, but also reveal their intentionality in the search for rights. In terms of agency, I use the Bourdieusian term to narrate how indigenous people take alcohol as negative capital to reverse negative stereotypes and enhance identity and solidarity. I argue that the character of current governmentality over indigenous drinking is against 'otherness'.

Regarding the colonial-settler situation, I use the indigenous groups' slogan 'No One is an Outsider' to reiterate the goal of this study: to effect a shift towards reflective and inclusive perspectives on indigenous people's health issues. In this sense, there needs to be a turn from obsessive rumination on indigenous people's 'abnormal' behaviours to further understanding of this stigmatised group's demands. I finish by proposing a reframing of the epistemology of indigenous people's drinking practices and conclude that drinking can be interpreted as a 'passage to rites/rights' that represents the struggle for the traditional values abandoned under colonisation, and the rights of which indigenous peoples have been deprived.



## **2. Methodology**

### **2.1 Multi-sited fieldwork in the era of displacement**

Inspired by George Marcus's (1995) post-modern ethnography, I conducted multi-sited fieldwork in order to juxtapose various vignettes and to assemble as holistic a picture as possible of the life situation of the many indigenous groups found in Taiwan today. The major rationale for such methods is that indigenous people are no longer – if they ever were – merely living within geographically fixed 'tribal societies' but experience high levels of mobility. Also, the meanings of drinking practices have been generated through processes of displacement, both physically and psychologically. I use Clifford's (1996:12) idea of 'roots and routes', the connotation of 'travel' being helpful as the embodied understanding of the experience of displacement, diasporas and interethnic encounters that many indigenous people in Taiwan have experienced.

#### **2.1.1 'Roots and routes'**

To examine spatial practice, Clifford (1997:54) discusses the 'everyone "knows" it' photograph of 'Malinowski's tent pitched in the midst of a Trobriand village' that has 'long served as a potent mental image of anthropological fieldwork' but still left a question about the 'actual scene' of his fieldwork. Although Malinowski's work established the paradigm of in-depth, single site fieldwork, Marcus (1995:106) uses *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* to argue that 'staying with the movement of a particular group of initial subjects' is an example of 'following the people' using multi-sited techniques. Salazar, Elliot and Norum (2017:2-8) also use Malinowski's research on the Kula trading cycle as a study engaging with subjects, objects and

ideas ‘on the move’ to argue that studying mobility is nothing new. However, mobility as part of our life experience is growing, and ‘as a complex assemblage of movement, social imaginaries and experience, mobility is infused with both attributed and self-ascribed meanings’ (ibid.).

To explore the meanings of indigenous people’s drinking practices, staying at a single site would never be enough since indigenous people do not live as isolated ‘tribes’. Clifford (1997:54) adopts Michel de Certeau’s term ‘spatial practice’:

‘For de Certeau, “space” is never ontologically given. It is discursively mapped and corporeally practiced [...] But it is not a space until it is practiced by people’s active occupation, their movements through and around it. In this perspective, there is nothing given about a “field.” It must be worked, turned into a discrete social space, by embodied practices of interactive travel.’

In an age of displacement, researchers may have encountered more misplaced or temporarily lost experience and realised that it is not enough to carry out the studies by being fixed in one place. Russell (2000:88) echoes Clifford’s play on words and asserts the need to expand the ethnographic map but stresses:

“‘[T]ravel encounters” alone would be a rather unproductive way to study these themes, and that while “routes” are as important as “roots” both have to be studied concurrently for a deeper understanding of migration and ethnic identity.’

Thus, Russell indicates that ‘routes’ have extended our understanding of ‘roots’ and argues that one can have processual and relational understanding of a specific culture by looking at the relationship between ‘routes’ and ‘roots’.

It is naive to presume that indigenous people should return to the root of their drinking cultures without considering their life experience of movement and diaspora. The meanings of indigenous people’s drinking have interwoven stitches from various angles. On the one hand, drinking cultures have been transformed and reshaped along with the societal changes. On the other, the ontology of what is a ‘drink’ is no longer consistent. The traditionally made millet wine is a different thing from the canned beer that can be bought in a convenience store, despite sharing the same Chinese Mandarin term, ‘*jiu*’(酒). Such complexity comes from indigenous people’s long history of migrations originating from the colonial situation for more than a century. From collective relocation during Japanese rule period to current diasporas, alcohol use has become a symbolic practice of cultural production that originates from the experience of displacement of any kind.

### **2.1.2 Scale up and scale out**

In order to capture indigenous people’s drinking practices refashioned by displacement, I arranged several visits to different Taiwanese ethnic groups during my fieldwork. My aim was not only to compare the life experiences between them but to explore their shared situations and find out how these shaped their drinking practices. Echoing Clifford’s proposal that in conducting ethnography through travel anthropologists may need to abandon their obsession with finding the ‘roots’ of sociocultural forms and identities, I was interested in discovering the ‘routes’ that

(re)produce them instead. In my fieldwork, some of the travel routes were planned and some of them were extempore.

What is multi-sited research? Marcus (1995:105) writes:

‘Multi-sited research is designed around chains, paths, threads, conjunctions, or juxtapositions of locations in which the ethnographer establishes some forms of literal, physical presence, with an explicit, posited logic of association or connection among sites that in fact defines the argument of the ethnography.’

By adapting Marcus’s outlines of those techniques, I designed my fieldwork by following the person (people who drink/not drink), the thing (what people drink), the concept (drinking culture and values), the metaphor (the interpretation of drinking), the plot (the scenario of drinking/not-drinking), the story (the history or the anecdote) or the allegory (the indigenous legends) and the conflict (the clash and the debate).

In contemporary times, local experience is vertically implicated by the state’s governance and horizontally modified by the relationship with other groups of people. Echoing the multi-sited approach, Salazar (2010:17) methodologically proposes both scaling up and scaling out the ways of ethnographic work to produce ‘glocal’ insight. Besides looking into how people are connected ‘locally, nationally, regionally and globally’ from the fieldwork, Salazar (ibid.) adapts Gupta and Ferguson’s (1997:38) suggestion of research data such as ‘archive research, public discourse, interviewing, journalism, fiction, or statistical representations of collectivities’. Moreover, one can explore the horizontal connections among sites and people by strategically including more than one locale in the analysis (Salazar 2010.).

The fieldwork lasted for twelve months. I did participant observation, in-depth interviews and focus groups. The place where I stayed the longest was Wufeng, where

I provided medical services and conducted my preliminary research during 2012-2015, as my principal fieldsite. The population in Wufeng is mainly Atayal and Saisiyat people. During that time, I built trustworthy relationships with local people. In Wufeng, known by local people as a former doctor, I served as a volunteer in a Culture and Health Station (文化健康站) and conducted several sessions of health education activities, including focus groups to discuss drinking issues with local people. However, I tried not to apply too much medical knowledge in the discussions but focused on local people's everyday experience.

I firstly observed indigenous people's everyday life in Wufeng, including their daily routines, work and labour, rest and sleep, as well as more collectively organised social events and ritual behaviours. I observed how the practices of drinking are embedded in everyday life. However, indigenous people are not only those villagers who always stay within certain geographic borders but are also people on the move. Therefore, I began to visit other places. The places where I engaged in participant observation were urban indigenous communities in Hsinchu City, where indigenous groups have settled since the 1980s. I repeatedly visited the urban communities throughout the year. The ethnic groups of these communities are mostly Amis and Paiwan people, who have immigrated from Eastern and Southern Taiwan, and they still travel back and forth to their original villages during the holidays, throughout their lifetimes.

In these places, I took part in activities that were held in honour of any kind of occasion, such as family gatherings, recreation time with friends spent singing karaoke, community-based meetings and rituals. I also observed how people's drinking patterns relate to gender, age, generational position, kinship relations and social classes. I observed how people interact with each other, whether they are sober

or intoxicated, and the emotional resonances of alcohol use. I also observed how people negotiate their values about drinking individually, in a familial sense, collectively and even in clinical settings. Moreover, on some occasions, I drink together with the local people. Although some informants already know I am a medical doctor who may suggest them not to drink too much, I participate in the events that people drink. I try not to stand on the anti-alcohol side but show curiosity of why and how people drink (and not drink).

In addition, I took tourism related to alcohol use as part of my research object since many indigenous communities have adopted the business of tourism in everyday life. Given the question of the authenticity of the drinking culture, I took traveling as an embodied practice to explore the meanings of drinking. In addition to Wufeng and Hsinchu, I travelled to other indigenous villages. Some of them were pre-arranged journeys, like travelling to Makotaay in Hualien County, for its famous ritual of heavy drinking, or to Orchid Island (Lanyu) where there were no drinking or winemaking traditions but where drinking was very prevalent. Some visits were planned by snowballing the list of destinations, like Cinsbu in Jiashi Township, where villagers have collected alcohol bottles stamped 'preserved for highland', and Kalibuan in Nantou County, which has become famous for its alcohol-free movement after being covered by journalists.

I conducted 37 in-depth interviews (Table 2.2) and four focus groups, in formal and informal settings (Table 2.3) during my fieldwork. I interviewed residents about life experiences; indigenous elders, pastors and preachers for the historical and cultural context of the fieldsites; indigenous doctors and nurses for local perceptions and experience of medical interventions; and activists who had ever taken part in indigenous movements or who were working in community-based organisations.

Some major events I took part in are listed in Table 2.4. Finally, I used local history archives, and newspapers and other media resources such as documentary films, TV news, entertainment shows and commercials as additional source materials for this study.

The places I stayed and visited are as follows:

<b>Places</b>	<b>Ethnic groups</b>	<b>Dates (and events)</b>
Wufeng Township, Hsinchu County	Atayal, Saisyat	August 2017-August 2018
Hsinchu City: Urban indigenous communities	Amis, Paiwan	August 2017-August 2018
Jianshe Township, Hsinchu County	Atayal	Cinsbu: 9 <sup>th</sup> -10 <sup>th</sup> December 2017 Smangus: 8 <sup>th</sup> May, 2018
Namasia Township and Shanlin District in Kaosiung City	Kanakanavu and Bunun	1 <sup>st</sup> : 7 <sup>th</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup> December 2017 2 <sup>nd</sup> : 23 <sup>rd</sup> March 2018
A'tolan	Amis	6 <sup>th</sup> -7 <sup>th</sup> February 2018
Sapuliu and Kanadu in Taimali, Taitung County	Paiwan	7 <sup>th</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup> February 2018
Ulay District, New Taipei City	Atayal	20 <sup>th</sup> April 2018
Kalibuan in Xinyi Township, Nantou County	Bunun	21 <sup>st</sup> -22 <sup>nd</sup> February 2018
Makotaay in Hualien County	Amis	20 <sup>th</sup> -23 <sup>rd</sup> July 2018 ( <i>Ilisin</i> )
Orchid Island (Lanyu)	Tao	24 <sup>th</sup> -27 <sup>th</sup> July 2018
Taipei City	16 <sup>th</sup> October 2017 ('A Journey to Recover Lost Territories' Rally) 11 <sup>th</sup> March 2018 (Anti-Nuclear Rally)	

Table 2. 1 The places I stayed and visited.



- A Taipei City
- B Hsinchu City
- C Wufeng Township, Hsinchu County
- D Jianshe Township
- E Kalibuan, Xinyi Township, Nantou County
- F Makotaay in Hualien County
- G Sapulju and Kanadu in Taimali in Taitung County
- H Namasia Township
- I Shanlin District
- J Orchid Island

Figure 2. 1 The map of multi-sited fieldwork (the map of Taiwan is adapted from Figure 1.1).



The different kinds of data I collected in each place are as follows:

1. Participant observation:

- Wufeng (main field site)
- Chutung
- Hsinchu City (urban indigenous communities)
- Other *buluo* in Mid, Southern and Eastern Taiwan (short visits)

2. In-depth interviews: 37 interviewees

- Indigenous elders
- Indigenous doctors and nurses
- Activists (indigenous movement, grass-roots movement, artists)
- Pastors and Preachers
- *Jiejiuban* members
- Aboriginal Victory Association (AVA) members

3. Focus Groups

- Culture and Health stations
- Urban indigenous communities

## **2.2 General ethical considerations**

My research was reviewed and given ethical approval by the Research Ethics and Data Protection Committee in the Department of Anthropology at Durham University. The approval letter was issued on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2017. This study was also approved by the Research Ethics Review Committee in National Tsing Hua University, Taiwan (REC No.: 10612ES085), and the Central Advisory Council established under the spirit of the rights to be consulted, clearly listed in The Indigenous Peoples Basic Law.

### **2.2.1 The right to informed consent**

When I began conducting my research on indigenous drinking issues, it was just at the time that the state tried to make laws to ensure the protection of rights of indigenous people. Although ‘The New Partnership Policy’ had even been recognised by the Taiwanese government in 2002, the legislative process of the related law was still pending. In 2015, the government finally announced The Indigenous Peoples Basic Law. In Taiwan, Article 21 of the Basic Law of Indigenous Peoples is a legal basis for indigenous group consent and benefit-sharing (Ho 2017). Paragraph 1, Article 21 of The Basic Law regulates researchers quite strictly, as shown in the ethical guidelines (2.2.2) below.

The enactment of the law echoed the notion of the rights of indigenous people that have been stressed in the international community. In 2007, The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) was adopted by the General Assembly. According to that Declaration, indigenous peoples have the right to be consulted and to give or withdraw their consent to any policy that deals with their rights.

On 1<sup>st</sup> January 2016, the Ministry of Health and Welfare and the Council of Indigenous Peoples announced the ‘Measures for the Implementation of Indigenous Group Consultations and Methods for Sharing Benefits from Human Subjects Research’ (Measures; 人體研究計畫諮詢取得原住民族同意與約定商業利益及其應用辦法, translation by author), which is based on the Basic Law and the Human Subjects Research Act (HSRA). It is the most important regulation on the process of informed consent in indigenous research.

### 2.2.2 Ethical guidelines

During the fieldwork, I upheld the ethical guidelines of:

1. ‘Measures for the Implementation of Indigenous Group Consultations and Methods for Sharing Benefits from Human Subjects Research’ (Measures; 人體研究計畫諮詢取得原住民族同意與約定商業利益及其應用辦法, translation by author), which is based on the Basic Law and the Human Subjects Research Act (HSRA).
2. The Code of Ethics of Taiwan Society for Anthropology and Ethnology. According to the Code, ‘the informed consent to anthropological research is not limited to merely signing a consent form; what is important is a more dynamic and continuous process of communication. This process may be adjusted at any time during the research through continuous dialogue and negotiation with the research subjects.’
3. Paragraph 1 of Article 21 in ‘The Indigenous Peoples Basic Law’ in Taiwan: ‘When governments or private parties engage in land development, resource utilization, ecology conservation and academic research in indigenous land, tribe and their adjoining land which is owned by the government, they shall consult and obtain consent from indigenous peoples or tribes, even their participation, and share benefits with indigenous people.’
4. ‘The Application Methods of Informed Consent and Commercial Advantages Contract of Human Research on Aboriginal People’ set up by the Council of Indigenous People and the Ministry of Health and Welfare, Taiwan.
5. AAA Codes of Ethics 2012 (Principles of Professional Responsibility) and AAA Statements on Ethics.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> The full text of Principles of Professional Responsibility can be found on the American Anthropological Association Ethic Forum: <http://ethics.americananthro.org/category/statement/>

I have passed the ethical approvals from 1. Research Ethics and Data Protection Committee Department of Anthropology, Durham University, 2. Research Ethics Committee, National Tsing Hua University, Taiwan (REC No. 10612ES085) and 3. Central Advisory Council Meeting in The Council of Indigenous Peoples, Taiwan.

All interviews, including casual conversations and fieldnotes, were conducted in accordance with the above guidelines under the principles of confidentiality and anonymity. Informants will not be identified in any report/publication. However, some people may wish to be acknowledged by name, which the researcher should respect. Some informants play very specific roles in local communities, so it can be difficult to anonymise them totally. In such cases, I explained the risk to informants before the interview. The anticipated consequences of the research were communicated as fully as possible to the individuals and groups likely to be affected.

In all formal interviews, I gave all interviewees a Participant Information Sheet, which contains information about the purpose of the study and several questions: ‘Why have I been invited?’ ‘What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?’ ‘What are the possible benefits of taking part?’ ‘Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?’ All interviewees were also given my contact details.

I used an audio recorder as a monitoring device during interviews. I verbally asked informants for their consent to record their interviews and informed participants that this device would only be used as an aid to help transcribe the field notes and would not be used for any other purpose. Information concerning each audio recording was stored under a specific code to ensure that all information was anonymous and well protected. All informants were given the option of having their audio recordings destroyed after the study’s completion. Audio recordings were only

be accessible to the researcher but, if requested, could be made available to the individual being interviewed.

In this thesis, for all the pictures in which faces were exposed enough to identify them, I either got permission from the person(s) involved or blurred their faces to maintain anonymity. All pictures in the thesis were taken by me unless the descriptions indicate otherwise. Unless the interviewee requested otherwise, the names of the informants have been changed or anonymised.

My research is about alcohol use and health. The role of the researcher may affect the participants, especially when the researcher has his dual role of observer and medical doctor. Some of my moral values regarding alcohol use might have been present during fieldwork even though I tried to remain neutral. The negative value of drinking might sometimes have been projected onto local people and served to further stigmatise them. I tried to have insight regarding this. However, I tried my best at all times to respect informants' values without judging them.

The interviews and focus groups conducted, and the events that the researcher experienced, are as follows:

	Category	Names	age	sex	Ethnic Group	Durations
1	Folk/local activists and artist	Ms Chu	50+	F	Saisiyat	1 time x 2 hrs
2		Laling	40+	M	Atayal	1 time x 2 hrs
3		Ms Chen	70	F	Atayal	1 time x 2 hrs
4		Ms Chen	50+	F	Amis	1 time x 1.5 hrs
5		Mr Tseng	70+	M	Atayal	3 times x 2 hrs
6	Local organisations	Yuciy	40+	F	Atayal	2 times x 2 hrs
7		Apuu	50+	F	Kanakanavu	1 time x 2 hrs
8		Ms Chou	50+	F	Amis	1 time x 1.5 hrs
9	Aboriginal	Mr Sha	35	M	Bunun	1 time x 2 hrs
10	Victory Association	Mr Huang	40+	M	Han	1 time x 1 hrs
11		Mr Tsai	50+	M	Bunun	1 time x 1 hrs

12		Mr Ku	30+	M	Bunun	1 time x 1 hrs
13		Mr Wang	30	M	Han	1 time x 1 hrs
14	Jiejiuban members	YJ	30+	F	Atayal	1 time x 1 hrs
15		MH	30+	F	Atayal	1 time x 1 hrs
16		CL	40+	F	Atayal	1 time x 1 hrs
17		HM	40+	F	Atayal	1 time x 1 hrs
18	Shop owners and street vendors	Mr Chao	45	M	Saisiyat	1 time x 1 hrs
19		Ms Kao	50+	F	Atayal	1 time x 1 hrs
20		Mrs A	60+	F	Atayal	2 time x 1 hrs
21	Local Health Practitioners	Dr An	35	F	Tsou	1 time x 1 hrs
22		Dr She	30	F	Han	1 time x 1 hrs
23		Dr Kao	70+	M	Paiwan	1 time x 2 hrs
24		Dr Lian	38	F	Paiwan	1 time x 1 hrs
25		Xiangyi	45	F	Saisiyat	2 time x 1 hrs
26		Dr Tien	38	M	Bunun	1 time x 1 hrs
27		Ms Tien	50+	F	Amis	1 time x 1 hrs
28		Dr Chen	37	M	Han	1 time x 1 hrs
29	Local pastors and preachers	Utux Lbak	60+	M	Atayal	1 time x 2 hrs
30		Sai	60+	M	Bunun	1 time x 2 hrs
31		Omi Wilang	56	M	Atayal	1 time x 2 hrs
32		Along	50+	M	Atayal	1 time x 1 hrs
33	Urban Labour workers	Mr Chou	50+	M	Paiwan	1 time x 1 hrs
34		Mrs Chou	50+	F	Paiwan	1 time x 1 hrs
35		Mr Yeh	41	F	Amis	1 time x 1 hrs
36	Local teachers	Seita	40+	F	Atayal	1 time x 1.5 hrs
37		Yayut	49	F	Atayal	1 time x 1.5 hrs

Table 2. 2 The list of interviewees for in-depth interviews

Groups	Number of people	Venue	Duration	Type
Elder people in Wufeng	20	Culture and Health Station in Taoshan Village	2 times x 1.5 hrs	Formal
Aboriginal Victory Association members	15	The prayer room of Aboriginal Victory Association	1 time x 1.5 hrs	Formal

Libahak Community	10	Outdoor space	1 time x 1.5 hrs	Informal
Naruwan Community	10	Outdoor space	1 time x 1.5 hrs	Informal

Table 2. 3 The list of focus groups

Dates	Events	Places	Related Chapters
25 <sup>th</sup> to 26 <sup>th</sup> August 2017	Pslkawtas (Chulin and Huayuan Villages Joint Ceremony)	Hoping Buluo, Wufeng Township, Hsinchu County	5.2.2
7 <sup>th</sup> October 2017	Taoshan Primary School 100 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary	Ulay <i>Buluo</i> , Wufeng Township, Hsinchu County	4.3.2
16 <sup>th</sup> October 2017	IDS ‘Retrospect & Prospect’ conference	Taipei City	3.3.2
23 <sup>rd</sup> October 2017	Indigenous people’s rally: A Journey to Recover Lost Territories	Taipei City	6.2.1
6 <sup>th</sup> November 2017 20 <sup>th</sup> November 2017	Body Mapping Workshop and Focus Groups	Taoshan Culture and Health Station, Wufeng Township	3.3.3
31 <sup>st</sup> March 2018	Anti-Nuclear Rally	Taipei City	6.4.5
28 <sup>th</sup> March 2018	Eviction of vendors’ area	Ulay <i>Buluo</i> , Wufeng Township, Hsinchu County	6.1.2
23 <sup>rd</sup> June 2018	Ulay Tribal Council Preparatory Meeting	Ulay <i>Buluo</i> , Wufeng Township, Hsinchu County	7.5.1
14 <sup>th</sup> July 2018	Indigenous people’s singing competition	Hsinchu City	7.4.2
20 <sup>th</sup> to 22 <sup>nd</sup> July 2018	Makotaay Ilisin	Makotaay <i>Buluo</i> , Hualien County	5.3
3 <sup>rd</sup> August 2018	Ilin in Qianjia	Community, Hsinchu City	6.3.3

Table 2. 4 The lists of the events that the researcher participated during the fieldwork.

### 2.2.3 Conclusion

The study aims to know which – and if so, how – incongruent drinking practices may be related to the shared background and how similar stories have emerged from different contexts. The multi-sited fieldwork here does not mean merely using embodied movement as a method of study but considering all those cultural practices which may be implicated by travel into account. By means of scaling up and scaling out the subjects that I follow, the study explores the cultural connectivity and relationality related to Taiwanese indigenous people's contemporary circumstances regarding drinking.

It is not a comparative study, ambitiously claiming to illustrate the holistic picture of all the indigenous *buluo*. In 2018, there were 746 officially registered indigenous *Buluo* in Taiwan, and I just visited a few of them. However, by using travelling as a method, I position myself as an embodiment of perspectival displacement and try to find the partial connection (Strathern 2004) between the various groups of people from a reflective and intersubjective interpretation.



### **3. Governing Indigenous People's Drinking in Taiwan**

Drinking has been taken as part of indigenous people's common unhealthy lifestyle in Taiwan. In a modernised and post-colonial society, human experiences and the practice of technology are institutionalised through the process of colonisation. That is why indigenous people's drinking practices are pigeonholed into a deviant and hazardous category by the dominant health narratives. Although the Taiwanese government has been trying to diminish health inequalities by enhancing medical resources and carrying out intervention policies, drinking is continuously stigmatised through repetitive medical-health discourses. In this chapter, I review and reflect on the current government's health intervention strategies. I highlight their lack of cultural competency based on indigenous medical practitioners' opinions and local lay people's life experience. In recent years, the notion of 'cultural care' has been raised and the government has encouraged local communities to set up Culture-Health Stations, which are used as daycare centres for indigenous elder people as part of the government's long-term care policy. In the end of the chapter, I describe my experience of participating in health education sessions and interviewing several Atayal women in Wufeng and discuss the limits of cultural care in the context of indigenous culture.

#### **3.1 Indigenous people's drinking in Taiwan: A medical gaze**

Problematic drinking is one of the most prevalent worldwide mental health issues among indigenous people, including in Taiwan (Cohen 1999). Currently, in Taiwan, the pathological model is popularly applied to problematic alcohol use. The 'disease model' of 'alcoholism' was first invoked for alcohol in the 1930s, while a 'new public health' model began to extend across the substance use domain in the

1970s (Berridge 2013). Development of international movements of mental hygiene also promoted the expansion of definitions of mental illness to include alcoholism (Thomson 1995).

Alcohol use has been discussed in modern psychiatry and anthropology in Taiwan for more than half a century. However, the current views of modern psychiatry tend to reproduce idiosyncratic characterisations of indigenous people's drinking practices, resulting in 'restricted explanations, inadequate responses, and limited amelioration of problematic drinking in indigenous communities' (Wu 2019:230).

The use of alcohol among indigenous people has often been interpreted through the psychiatric lens of pathological drinking behaviours. Hence, interventions are based on the narrative of 'health'. During the Japanese colonial period, scattered research was conducted relating to drinking behaviours among *Takasago-zoku* (高砂族).<sup>15</sup> Trained at the Japanese colonial government-founded Taihoku Imperial University as the first Taiwanese psychiatrist, Rin's (1957) narrative research on the Nan-shih Amis people was the very first study focusing on alcoholism among Taiwanese indigenous people after WWII. It brought about awareness of 'cultural change' and proposed the need to establish community mental health programmes. Later on, Dr Rin conducted research by collaborating with his colleague, Tsung-Yi Lin, and launched a nationwide study which found minimal (0.11%) but still significantly higher rates of alcoholism among indigenous populations (Atayal, Paiwan, Saisiyat and Amis people) compared to the Han Chinese between 1949 and 1953 (Rin and Lin 1962).

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<sup>15</sup> *Takasago-zoku* (高砂族), is the Japanese term used by the Japanese government for indigenous people in Taiwan.

Over the next fifty years, Taiwanese psychiatrists took great interest in the relationship between ethnicity and drinking among Han Chinese and other indigenous people (Hwu et al. 1990; Wu and Shen 1985; Liu and Cheng 1998). Something overwhelming to those physician-researchers was that, compared with the findings of Rin and Lin (1962), indigenous people were found to have a hundred-fold prevalence (10%) of alcohol addiction after three decades (Hwu et al. 1990). The prevalence of alcohol addiction reached between 17% and 32% among various indigenous communities (Cheng and Chen 1995).

Given rising alcoholism among indigenous groups, clinician-scientists have tried to establish diagnostic standards that suit local measures of ‘mental disorders’ through cross-disciplinary approaches (Cheng and Hsu 1995; Hwu et al. 2003). The notion of ‘acculturation’ as a factor of mental illness has been pointed out regarding the minority groups’ situations. The theory was also adopted in early anthropological research and, later, cross-disciplinary studies on epidemiology and anthropology (Li 1979; Cheng and Hsu 1992; Cheng and Hsu 1995). However, use of the concept ‘acculturation’ may still fall into the reductionism that takes interethnic encounters for granted as generating the ‘bad habit’ of drinking (Wu 2019).

During the 1990s, inspired by the Human Genome Project which aimed to map and understand human genes, clinician-researchers attempted to attribute indigenous people’s drinking problems to genetics (Chen et al. 1991; Chen et al. 1997; Cheng et al. 2004; Sun et al. 2005), despite racist accusations directed towards genetic approaches (Waldrum 2004). Related to this, the ‘firewater myth’ that Europeans introduced Native Americans to alcohol, which indigenous people were *genetically* unprepared to handle, has been overthrown and heavily criticised (Garcia-Andrade, Wall, and Ehlers 1997; Gonzalez and Skewes 2016; Johnson 2016; Gonzalez and

Skewes 2018). Likewise, Taiwanese social scientists have started to argue that political-economic forces, rapid social change and the effects of modernity play important roles in explaining drinking problems among indigenous peoples (Chen 2014; Hsia 2010; Tsai 2007).

In fact, for researchers in other fields, these causative factors are not contradictory. Dr Tai-Ann Cheng, one of the epidemiologists who contributed to the aforementioned related epidemiological studies in Taiwan, explained to the media right after they announced their discovery of the ‘drinking gene’ that indigenous people may use alcohol as a ‘self-medication behaviour’ to relieve the stress of assimilation. Dr Cheng told the press:

*‘It is not easy to solve the problem of alcoholism. In a way, there is a need to raise indigenous people’s education level [...] In addition, bringing local culture into the industry is very useful [...] In recent years, there is a culture of ‘One town, one product’<sup>16</sup>[...] Turning different places into popular tourist spots would be helpful for boosting the local economy and increasing employment. [...] Once everyone becomes a tourist guide, no one will have time to be depressed and drink.’<sup>17</sup>*

In terms of interventions, proposals like this seem naïve. The development of tourism is not an easy task but needs multiple actors and depends on certain conditions (see Chapter 7). However, they showed that indigenous people’s drinking is far more complicated than those single-factor theories. Finding a biomarker for alcoholism that

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<sup>16</sup> Inspired by ‘One Village One Product’ (OTOP) movement in Japan, a government-led project launched in 1989 in Taiwan and supervised by the Small and Medium Enterprise Administration (SMEA) of the Ministry of Economic Affairs of Taiwan to promote local products.

<sup>17</sup> The Epoch Times: ‘Study found Indigenous People’s Specific Gene Exempts the Sin of Alcoholism’. (研究：原住民特定基因並非酒癮原罪) I have translated the headline from Chinese. <http://www.epochtimes.com/b5/5/10/10/n1081128.htm> (Retrieved on 31 July 2019)

gives the ‘deviant behaviour’ a biomedical label may be a way to destigmatise the moral fault of drinking, but it may also whitewash the structural violence inflicted on indigenous groups.

## **3.2 Governing drinking**

### **3.2.1 *Jiejiu*: Imposing health citizenship**

The health discourse through which indigenous people’s drinking is an unhealthy behaviour is the predominant mindset behind health interventions. *Jiejiu* projects, which refer to those moderate drinking schemes launched by public or independent institutions, are promoted through a narrative that one should get rid of alcohol to achieve a better life. Western-medicine based knowledge that emphasises individual management as the state’s right and personal responsibility to pursue ‘health citizenship’ (Porter 2011) has become the schema of *jiejiu* practice.

Indigenous people have adapted to modern lifestyles during the past decades, but this should not be seen as a natural process of assimilation, since government interventions to promote health and well-being cannot be ignored. From the 1950s to the 1970s, the KMT government set up the ‘Regulations Governing Life Improvement Movement for Highland Aborigines in Taiwan Province’ (台灣省山地人民生活改進運動辦法). The regulations listed the main tasks as to improve indigenous people’s clothes, diet, accommodation, economics and education by holding competitions between the communities. The government assigned the education, agriculture and forestry, police and health sectors to carry out this plan. It both facilitated the modernisation of indigenous life and led to the breakdown of indigenous culture.

### 3.2.2 Government-commissioned *jiejiu* projects

From the 1980s to the 1990s, the government commissioned several intervention programs to address indigenous alcoholism within local institutions. These projects were trying to move away from solely medical centred or institutionalised practice, but carried out plans from the local communities. Although these projects did not have positive outcomes, their working models have been adapted and carried forward to further *jiejiu* projects.

In 1993, the Department of Health, Executive Yuan held a conference on ‘Indigenous People’s Drinking and Health Problems’ in Hualien, and established the ‘Indigenous People’s Health Research Centre’ to establish the ‘Preventive Working Model for Drinking Behaviour in Indigenous Communities’(山地社區飲酒行為預防工作模式). The conference’s participants came from cross-disciplinary fields including the public sector, local medical professionals, experts from the social sciences and education, pastors and social workers. They raised two major questions: to what extent should drinking be seen a problem among indigenous people and how are alcohol-related health issues linked to indigenous people?

In regard to these concerns, the working model was set to be designed in terms of ‘community participation’, ‘phased implementation’ and ‘spontaneity’. The working team was set to strategically implement the plan in Hsiulin Township and managed to hold workshops, speeches and competitions and even make a propaganda film. The project also used household investigation and arranged psychoeducation in a phased way (Chang 1993) .

Starting in 1996, a five-year Alcohol Prevention Programme (ALPP) was conducted by The Department of Psychiatry of the National Taiwan University

Hospital in Wulai, an Atayal Township in northern Taiwan. The Chief Investigator was Dr Hwo Hai-Gwo, who developed the idea based on several epidemiological findings. Knowing it would be tough work, he proposed a ten-year-long project:

*‘To find a place, somewhere with high prevalence [of alcoholism], and near Taipei, we only knew there were so many people with drinking problems. However, how should we develop the tool? What about local people’s opinions? We consulted three groups of people. The first was people from public sector organizations like the township office or health centre, the second is church people, and finally, local people who care much about “culture”.’*

(Interview with Dr Hwo Hai-Gwo, 15<sup>th</sup> Dec 2018)

In holding the household contact investigation and focus groups, Dr Hwo’s method was very much like what Vikram Patel, the advocate for global mental health, has proposed regarding scaling up psychiatric services and raising awareness about mental health problems (Patel 2015; Patel and Hanlon 2018). However, although the Taiwan project emphasised the autonomy of the community and aimed to develop healthy behavioural patterns that had ‘native cultural value’, the value of ‘culture’ was still too elitist. In the end, the project lasted just five years, since the budget was cut by the government. The programme concluded that the ALPP model is effective only among light drinkers (Hwu 1996).

### **3.2.3 The Love of Maya**

In 2005, the Council of Indigenous Peoples implemented the ‘Finding Selves, Promoting Health: Moderate Drinking Project’ by offering grants to local

organisations, including churches, non-government organisations (NGOs), schools and hospitals as partners in this health promotion. 'The Love of Maya', spearheaded by the San-min (renamed Namasia in 2008) Township Office, Kaohsiung County in 2006, became an indicative pilot project. The project collaborated with local health centres to encourage villagers to quit drinking by providing financial rewards. In 2006, the Township Office designated a budget of up to NT 3,000,000 dollars to encourage residents to participate. During the first phase, 46 residents were recruited, and 28 participants were announced to have 'quit' alcohol successfully. During the next year, San-min Township designated NT 2,000,000 dollars to continue the programme, claiming that the project was successful due to a better outcome, and that residents' motivation to abstain alcohol had also increased.

After that, the Council of Indigenous People intensively promoted its drinking control policy by making a propaganda film based on San-min Township's (Namasia) experience. The narrative of the film explains to the audience the difficulty of quitting drinking by adapting the theory of indigenous people's genetic predisposition to alcohol. In the film, Namasia people gather in a township, raise their hands and vow to quit drinking (Figure 3. 1). The host announces that the project is regulated so that once a participant is caught drinking three times they are excluded. Since then, several subprojects have been implemented under the IDS (Mountainous Area and Offshore Island Integrated Delivery System under National Health Insurance programme) and government-led "*jiejiu*" projects. Among these subprojects, narratives have continued to stress drinking as a 'bad habit'.





Figure 3. 1 Participants of ‘The Love of Maya’ project gathered in a township vowing to quit drinking (Screenshot from the government’s propaganda film of the *Jiejiu* project).

In December 2017, I arranged to visit certain indigenous community-based organisations in southern Taiwan and happened to chat with a group of Namasia residents who were familiar with the project. Below are some quotations from these conversations:

*‘There were rewards for reporting people who drink during the competition during that time. 500 NT dollars. I can earn that money if I spot you drinking secretly.’* That was the thing that the villagers remembered clearly.

*‘Finally, you get 20,000 NTD bonus! You would have of benefits if you attended the lessons, that was such a temptation! However, if you joined in, everybody was looking at you and thinking about how long it would last. Everyone knew he or she may drink secretly.’*

*‘They had to pass the blood test; their names were written on the tubes. They did that every three months.’* Another woman joined the discussion.

*‘They claimed that they would succeed after that six months. However, we all knew that after the six months, there will be a feast for celebration.’*

The villagers said teasingly *‘Do you know what were they awarded at last? A trip to Kinmen!’*<sup>18</sup>

*‘Kinmen? Why?’* I asked.

*‘To smell the alcohol!’* (Everyone burst out laughing)

This is a common experience for indigenous people. When I mentioned *jiejiu* projects in the indigenous communities I visited, villagers were mostly embarrassed. At first, they gave me a wry smile. If there were more people, they smiled at each other. *Jiejiu* projects were perceived as an ineffective solution to drinking problems but would not be rejected directly. One villager said ‘See, we are still dealing with this,’ and showed me a proposal for another health intervention project raised by another university team that had been sent to their community – as a process of the implementing the Right of Consent – which still includes the psychoeducation sessions for alcohol use.

### **3.3 Delivering Healthcare**

Medical care for indigenous people in Taiwan is currently delivered by public clinics and integrated delivery systems (IDSs) as part of the National Health Insurance (NHI) policy for indigenous townships (Wu 2019). These medical practices are provided mainly in institutionalised settings, while the medical professionals are all

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<sup>18</sup> Kinmen (金門) is an island county of Taiwan, located just off the Southeastern coast of China. It is famous for the production of Gaoliang wine, a strong distilled liquor of Chinese origin made from fermented sorghum.

trained in Western biomedical knowledge. Since 1999 IDSs have enhanced the accessibility of medical care in rural indigenous areas. In terms of health governance in Taiwan, therapeutic resources for indigenous people are pending because treatments for alcohol use disorders are not covered by NHI, while indigenous locals perceive themselves as lacking the professional skills for therapeutic treatment of problematic drinking. Although IDS have been set to enhance minority groups' access to health services, indigenous people would not cut down drinking for the sake of health, hence local healthcare practitioners are frustrated and discouraged.

### 3.3.1 Local health practitioners

Despite numerous intervention projects by various public sectors, local medical professionals still feel helpless. During my participation in the *jiejiu* project from 2012, local doctors told me they were not trained to deal with the issue and could not do anything except advising patients of the negative effects of drinking. Dr Chiu, a 60-year-old Atayal doctor, who had applied for the funding from the government and led one of the early *jiejiu* projects<sup>19</sup> in Wufeng in 2005, told me:

*'We do not have any professionals who can help us with this. Once they become even more severe and have mental disorders, we do not have a doctor with this speciality here.'*

(Dr Chiu, Atayal)

When I once again met Dr Chiu after I returned to Wufeng in 2017, he acknowledged the limits of medical intervention targeting alcohol use:

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<sup>19</sup> In 2005, the Council of Indigenous Peoples implemented the 'Finding Selves, Promoting Health: Drinking Control Project' and started to offer grants to local organisations for alcohol control. 'Skaro Tourism and Leisure Association' (霞喀羅觀光休閒協會), initiated by Dr A, was one of eight organisations to acquire funding during that year. (<https://news.ltn.com.tw/news/life/paper/13959>)

*‘Those who drink all day are people who have already abandoned themselves. They were supposed to be depressed, but now they choose to drink and, by way of this, they would feel happier.’*

It is hard for local doctors to deprive the villagers’ methods of self-medication. I heard similarly pessimistic opinions from other indigenous doctors, such as Dr Chang, a 46-year-old Atayal doctor who grew up in Wufeng:

*‘They are mostly in their 20s to 40s, most of them were drunk when they were brought here. Firstly, I would let them rest. After they wake up, I would ask them not to do this [...] just tell them that they will cause harm to their safety and families. [...] all I can do is warn them [...] During these eight years in Wufeng, no special clinics that focus on alcohol use have ever been set up. As for us, we did not have lessons regarding this. In recent years, although we have jiejiu projects, the director would not offer any training courses. We only deal with “pure” medical issues.’*

Indigenous doctors’ training in Taiwan was initiated according to the government’s policies to improve the lives of indigenous people. In addition to the ‘Life Improvement Movement’ regulations mentioned in the previous subchapter, the government also drew up directions to improve the infrastructure of medical care. The policies made after WWII show a strong link between nationalism and modernity. During the past half-century, the Taiwanese government has set out to train local indigenous health professionals including doctors, nurses and midwives in a phased way. Indigenous doctors still practising today are mostly trained under a

government-funded scheme which requires students to work for six to eight years in remote institutions before being free to seek work on their own. However, these indigenous doctors may be allocated to areas that do not belong to the same ethnic groups to them.

When asking about how indigenous health practitioners feel when dealing with alcohol, elsewhere in Taiwan I received the same response: ‘helpless’. These indigenous professionals who had been trained in Western biomedical medicine were embarrassed to apply their knowledge-based, individualised concepts of health to their own people. They feel pain when witnessing people’s declining health conditions and understand simultaneously that the stigma cannot be removed simply by asking people to quit drinking.

Dr Ann, a 36-year-old Tsou doctor I met at an IDS conference, decided to practice in her home village in Chiayi after being inspired by a senior fellow who had been devoted to the indigenous movement. However, being the only indigenous doctor in the local medical centre came with its problems:

*‘I feel helpless. I have been trying [...] although I had never lived in my home village for a period of time, I have been away from home for too long. When I was a child, I saw alcohol problems prevailing among my family members. When I come back, I try to empathise with their situations. I feel uncomfortable seeing non-indigenous colleagues take problematic drinking as a personal fault, using that scornful attitude.’*

Dr Lian (a 38-year-old Paiwan), who is working in Sandimen Township<sup>20</sup> now, previously worked in Wulai where the ‘Alcohol Prevention Programme’ (mentioned

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<sup>20</sup> Sandimen Township is an indigenous township in the mountainous area of Pingtung County, Taiwan.

in 3.2.2) was held. As previously mentioned, although the government attempted to train indigenous medical professionals to increase the manpower of healthcare in rural townships, doctors and nurses would be allocated to where the culture and language was strange to them. There are still gaps in language and culture, which is an obstacle to building trust. Dr. Lim admitted that, unlike local nurses who stay in a community for a long time, being frequently transferred may limit doctors' ability to build rapport with patients. What is worse is lacking the competency to understand local lives. Dr Lian, who returned to her home village in the south, mentioned:

*'Once there was a church that started a jiejiu project. It copied the way that psychiatrists treat drug addicts, "maintenance therapy," right? They used Mr. Brown Coffee<sup>21</sup> to replace alcohol. You know what? Alcohol use had indeed decreased. However, a new problem was created. Diabetes!'*

Miss Tien, a 48-year-old Amis nurse who had been working as a nurse in Wulai, experienced a similar situation regarding the cultural gap within ethnicities. Local nurses may be in a better position to build up rapport with residents, since their terms of service are longer, but local health practitioners may still be labelled as inspectors who police local people's behaviour. Miss Tien recalled:

*'Once the secretary [of the township office] said to me, "I am afraid of you. I would hide my glass now. It is like seeing someone who always asks people not to drink coming to me."'*

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The population there consists mainly of the Paiwan and Rukai people.

<sup>21</sup> Mr. Brown Coffee is a brand name of canned instant coffee which is popular among indigenous groups. Indigenous people mix it with rice wine in order to sweeten the drink and dilute the alcohol.

When I visited Miss Tien, she was still running a *jiejiu* project. Although she worked in the public health centre, her project was initiated through the independent organisation ‘Health Promotion Association’. She understands that the IDS model can be too ‘shallow’ because the institutions may be keen to demonstrate their achievement without gaining a deeper understanding of local people’s needs. Now she focuses on education in junior high schools as a kind of early intervention, though she knows that outcomes remain hard to predict.

There are also doctors who hold more radical opinions toward drinking. Trained in modern medicine, Dr Kao, a Paiwan doctor and an almost-self-taught anthropologist in his 70s who is also a *mamazangiljan* (Paiwan tribal chief) in Jinfeng Township, Taitung, had been elected to the Representative Assembly of Taiwan. I visited Dr Kao after being introduced through his niece, a young researcher I met at the annual conference of the Taiwan Society for Anthropology and Ethnology. She led me to meet Dr Kao in his private clinic, which he has run since retiring from a local public health centre in Taitung.

*‘Why do [indigenous people] drink that much? [...] Why? Because it is a ritual. If you were nominated to run for an election, whether for township mayor or member of the congress, you would start to drink since the day when you were chosen. Moreover, the endless drinking starts. You anthropologists call it “feast and famine”. We feel hungry when there is no prey, and we drink when we have food. Our elders would keep drinking for half to a whole month during harvest festivals, what was that for? To deal with the relation between the limbic system and the rational thinking brain! You might not have ever been drunk. My experience was drinking sorghum liquor with the headmaster of a school in*

*Mudan Township [an indigenous township in southern Taiwan]. He is a “mix” of the indigenous and Chinese mainlander. In order to become a headmaster, he tried hard to stay away from alcohol. He had been pondering whether he was indigenous or not. However, sometimes, he would go back to being indigenous. He met me, and we had sorghum liquor, 38 per cent, “Ko”, we soon took it all. We had two bottles of it, all drunk. On the second day, we woke up with a feeling of sobriety that we had never experienced. It had been totally washed out, that nerve system, without any dirt.’*

(Interview with Dr Kao, Taitung)

Dr Kao’s story of himself highlights his attitude towards alcohol, which has given him a different way of dealing with patients with alcohol-related issues. Medical terms such as ‘limbic system’ seem to reflect the ‘neurochemical self’, similar to Rose’s (2003) argument that self-identity is shaped by bio-neurological knowledge. However, that bio-neurological identity was not driven by pharmaceutical forces but by people struggling with their living situations and self-doubt. When Dr Kao was a young Paiwan man, he had never left the home village until he went to medical school in Tapei. He experienced a cultural shock in medical school but questioned his teachers, wondering how certain therapies could work in the indigenous world. He does not oppose the genetic theory which stresses the ALDH2 (aldehyde dehydrogenase) gene as a risk of alcohol dependence but holds his radical theories against mainstream medical knowledge.

He runs his own ‘Health Village’ where he accommodates heavy drinkers by solely accompanying people in need rather than criticising them. Since retiring from the position of the chief in a local health centre in Taitung, Dr Kao has run a clinic in



a Paiwan village, and occasionally hosts junior doctors and students interested in community medicine and indigenous healthcare issues. In his clinic, like in local medical centres elsewhere, there are health education posters on the walls. However, unlike those threatening slogans printed in bold, these posters express relatively soft and gentle opinions on drinking.

### **3.3.2 IDS Conference**

During my fieldwork, I participated in the ‘Integrated Delivery Systems in rural-mountain areas and offshore islands: Retrospect & Prospect’ conference (‘IDS conference’ henceforth). I noticed that plenty of local institutions have drawn up their plans for psychoeducation in alcohol use. However, for local communities, those collaborative intuitions are still outsiders lacking in cultural or even structural competencies. The arrangement of the conference, particularly the scenario of local community leaders expressing their thanks to the state, reveals that health governance is still imposes colonial power on indigenous people.

Medical care for Taiwanese indigenous people is currently provided mainly in Western biomedical settings and is delivered by public clinics and healthcare from IDS as part of the NHI policy for indigenous townships. The IDS was implemented in 1999 to remove geographical barriers to healthcare (Chan 2010) and is still in use. As previously mentioned, alcohol use is regarded by the government as a major issue among indigenous communities, yet treatments for alcohol use disorders are not covered by NHI. The reluctance of policymakers to deal with alcoholism reveals Taiwan’s ambiguous attitude toward drinking. This reluctance suggests that the excessive use of alcohol continues to be viewed as deviance rather than illness.

Taiwan's government announced the IDS plan in 1988 and officially launched it in 1999. Before then, there was a lack of medical resources in indigenous areas. According to an official report, among 368 administrative divisions in Taiwan, IDS has been pushing forward in 50 indigenous townships and outlying island areas to provide medical services to around 450,000 people.



Figure 3. 2 Local medical institutions attended the conference and displayed their project reports with posters.



Figure 3. 3 The community leader of Smangus, Masay Sulung, performing *lubu* at the IDS conference.

However, almost 20 years passed before the IDS conference was held for the policy review in the autumn of 2017. Representatives of local medical institutions attended the meeting and displayed their project reports with posters, many of them taking psychoeducation on reducing drinking as one of their major missions (Figure 3. 2).

At the meeting, an Atayal tribal community leader was invited to give a talk. Masay Sulung from Smangus, Jienshi Township performed a short piece on the *lubuw* (a traditional Atayal musical instrument, a kind of mouth harp) to express his gratitude to the government (Figure 3. 3). He said:

*‘Smangus was a dark buluo, but it is a bright buluo now. Thanks to the government’s support, our buluo will have more resources like a city has. Thanks for the officials here. We used to feel not like citizens of the Republic of China, but now we do feel so [...] But now, no more children are born on the bridge, since we have Mackay Memorial Hospital.’<sup>22</sup>*

These words seemed to express gratitude. However, the arrangement of his entertaining musical performance and his expressions of gratitude to the state’s policy still show the logic of health governance under the settler-colonial situation, regardless of the health inequalities brought about by the colonial history.

The increase in medical resources may have increased access to medical care in indigenous townships. However, health inequality is still significantly reflected in the high mortality rate of indigenous populations. According to official statistical data from the Council of Indigenous Peoples in 2013, indigenous people, who represent 2.3% of the total population in Taiwan, account for only 2% of hospital visits, cases

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<sup>22</sup> The chief kept mentioning that one of his sons was named the Atayal word for ‘bridge’ because his wife delivered their child on the bridge.

and medical expenses in the whole country. However, comparing the standardised mortality rates of indigenous people to the whole population in leading causes of death, chronic liver disease and liver cirrhosis are fourfold in ratio, while sepsis is 2.8, accidents and injuries 2.5, hypertension 2.4 and cerebrovascular disease 2.3. Authorities in health and indigenous people's affairs have obsessed over the alcohol-related aspects of these diagnoses but seem to be at their wits' end.

### **3.3.3 Cultural Care in Wufeng**

In 2006, the Council of Indigenous People proposed a project to promote a daycare centre for elderly indigenous people. In 2009, the project joined together with non-governmental medical resources, such as local hospitals, to establish a better long-term care environment. In 2015, the names of the daycare centres set up under this project were changed to Tribal Culture and Health Stations (CHS) in response to the concept of 'cultural care theory' proposed by Leininger (1991).

Up until 2017, there were 121 Tribal Culture and Health Stations. In 2017 was the enactment of a 'Ten-Year Programme for a Long-Term Care 2.0', the Taiwanese government's plan to establish 64 more Tribal Culture and Health Stations in indigenous townships, and extend the service time from three to five days a week. The Taiwanese government has been criticised by citizens for failing to plan long-term care for an ageing population. However, the impromptu Long-Term Care 2.0 policy did highlight overworking and understaffing problems in the rural area.

Up to 2017, two tribal Culture and Health Stations have been established in Wufeng, one in Taoshan Village (Figure 3. 4) and the other in Huayouan Village. When I returned to Wufeng (Figure 3. 6), it was around the time that the government announced the expansion of the cultural care service. One day, when I visited the

Taoshan CHS, the nurses in Taoshan medical station were busy cleaning up unused space in the church next to the Tribal Culture and Health Station. They told me: ‘The officials from the Council of Indigenous People will be coming to see us. They asked us to present a project report which has our “cultural characteristics.”’ Xiangyi, a Saisiyat-born nurse who married into an Atayal family, was trying to decorate the space with Atayal woven fabrics and traditional bamboo baskets: ‘These pieces of cloth were made by my mother in law, and those handicrafts were made by our participants.’

The building of the CHS is a cement house with one floor and about 30 square metres of total indoor area. There were cracks on part of the walls, so only a third of the space could be used for storage. ‘We are not able to apply for funding because it does not reach the standard for rebuilding’, Xiangyi explained. Ironically, next to the building is a toilet with a board stating the names of the sponsors who paid for the refurbishment of the restroom.

The CHS stands next to the Taoshan Church on a steep hillside, which is difficult for people with disabilities to access. Every morning, the attendant drives a van to collect participants living in neighbouring villages and drops them off in the afternoon. For some of the villagers, the biggest contribution of the CHS is that it provides somewhere for the elders to keep each other company, which is something that has been lost in the contemporary rural area.



Figure 3. 4 Tribal Culture and Health Station in Taoshan Village, Wufeng.

The nurses have to design the activities by themselves:

*'We invited teachers to teach our participants handicrafts. We hold competitions in various themes, such as karaoke, or cooking. Of course, we merge the concept of health within it. That was interesting because they all thought that the food did not taste good in that way. We also need volunteers to organise the activities.'*

Xiangyi was trying to introduce what they had done, but apparently the notion of 'cultural care' is still a vague concept for local healthcare practitioners to design activities without guidelines.

Echoing the government's policy, Hsinchu Mackay Memorial Hospital launched its daycare centre in 2009. The main staff of the centre are the three nurses from Taoshan Medical Station and attendants recruited *in situ*. Their everyday jobs include leading group activities, mealtimes and psychoeducation sessions. They also provide food delivery, friendly phone calls and direct visits to disabled residents. The group activities range from card games to karaoke, singing, dancing and occasional mini-tours. Normally, there are about 20 participants in the station every day.

In Wufeng and many other indigenous townships, a similar style of care is provided through the ‘Tribal Health Promotion’ (部落健康營造) project launched by the Ministry of Health and Welfare. The difference is the funding administration and the age of participants. Among these, *jiejiu* is one of the most popular themes of health intervention in health education sessions, despite many indigenous people saying ‘We all know that already!’ Junior doctors who were receiving training in community medicine in Wufeng agreed with this perception. I saw them throughout the whole year during my fieldwork since they were assigned to give several psychoeducation sessions to local residents, and they told me that those indigenous people, from primary school students to elders, all complained of such ‘boring’ sessions since they are already aware of information related to units of alcohol and the risks associated with drinking. When I was asked by the nurses to give some talks to the participants of CHS, I took into account such complaints, which I had heard from many informants. Instead of conducting psychoeducation sessions, I organised a focus group to discuss experiences of drinking and a series of ‘body mapping workshops’ to promote discussion of the relationship between life history and health conditions, the results of which I shall now outline.

### **3.3.3.1 Focus group**

‘*Xiaomijiu ou ai ni...* (Millet wine, I love you)’, the session begins, with the popular ‘lin-ban song’, which describes the feeling of being drunk. There are various versions of the song. Some use *xiaomijiu* which refers to millet wine, and some use *baimijiu* or rice wine (see Chapter 4.1.2). The term ‘Lin-ban’ is the working group of the forestry business. From the Japanese governance era until the present day, the ruling governments of Taiwan have earned considerable sums by exporting wood to

foreign countries and many of the elderly people were engaged in such labour. The song ended in a mood that mixed bitterness and happiness, after which everybody felt free to share their own stories.

I took out some pieces of cardboard in different shapes of bottles which I had prepared beforehand. The old people then enthusiastically suggested what alcohol was represented by each piece of cardboard. I listed a couple of questions on the poster and urged participants to tell me when, why, where and how they drink. Everyone seemed happy to share their experiences (Figure 3. 5).

*‘That’s beer, I drink beer fortnightly. With friends. I won’t drink it without a friend. Every time I drink half “ta”(呔) [spoken in Mandarin Chinese, the unit of the amount that refers to the number 12]’. ‘Last time I had them in a wedding in Chutung [the neighbouring city to Wufeng].’*

*‘The rice wine [spoken in Mandarin Chinese as ‘mijiu’]. It is of course used for cooking, but I drink it because it is cheap.’ ‘We use it for making ‘ji-jui’, it normally uses six litres to make a pot of that’. ‘It is good for the women especially after giving birth!’*

‘Ji-jui’(雞酒), spoken in Mandarin Chinese, means chicken soup made of pure rice wine (*mijiu*) without a drop of water. Indigenous people believe that it is very good for health since they have adopted Chinese concepts of dietary supplementation in everyday life.

*‘Paolyta-B, I drink it twice a day. Sometimes I drink alone, sometimes friends share a bottle.’*



When I asked about the taste, answers varied.

*'It is sweet, I like it.'* *'No, it tastes a little bitter and too strong for me. I would mix it with Yakult (a probiotic milk beverage produced by a Japanese company ) or papaya milk.'* *'I would have some drink before going to bed, but Paolyta makes me sleepless'.* *'Because it contains stimulants, believe it or not. Many drivers need them.'* *'We can buy them in the grocery stores here, but you may not be able to buy it. They may think that you are the inspector.'*



Figure 3. 5 Discussion of the everyday use of various drinks.

Beer, rice wine and Paolyta B are the top three most popular drinks in Wufeng. An interesting phenomenon is that indigenous people living in Northern Taiwan prefer 'Taiwan Beer' which is produced by the Taiwan Tobacco & Liquor Corporation (TTL), while Southern indigenous people prefer Kirin Bar Beer, produced by a Japanese company. In fact, many indigenous elites condemn TTL since

its predecessor was the Taiwan Tobacco and Liquor Monopoly Bureau, which was established under a monopoly policy that prohibited private breweries for decades.

Another popular TTL product is Red Brand Rice wine. The rice wine is a popular distilled liquor normally used in Chinese and Taiwanese cooking, but since it is cheap, many indigenous people use it as a daily recreational drink. The Taiwanese government highlighted its political achievement of lowering the price of rice wine during the presidential election of 2008 which triggered harsh criticism from psychiatric professional societies.

Paolyta-B is a popular energy drink that contains Chinese herbal medicine, amino acids and vitamin B and is 8% alcohol. It is registered as medicine and mainly advertised to labour groups in Taiwan. According to the law, Paolyta-B and similar drinks can only be sold in pharmacies, but it is common to see these bottles, which are dark in colour and an unusual shape, in bins outside the grocery stores and local karaoke bars.

According to the experiences shared in the group, drinking is a very common daily activity among indigenous communities. Drinking practices also vary in how alcohol is consumed. Indigenous communities have developed a unique but creolised drinking culture which has been shaped by the collective interplay of the political and economic situation within their cultural practices throughout individual life histories. *Xiaomijiu* is a traditional brewed millet wine which is used in rituals. It is not so commonly used in everyday life but is still seen in all grocery stores.

### **3.4 Conclusion**

The institutionalisation of medical care, the training of medical professionals and the setup of the health delivery system all represent forms of scientific colonialism.

The healthcare narrative, which always links ‘healthy’ to ‘good citizenship’, is not useful in indigenous communities. However, actors in between the government and local people do try to negotiate with those medical theories and continuously redesign their approaches to the issue. In my preliminary study, I concluded the need to decolonise the toolkit, namely psychiatric knowledge, or whatever we use for health delivery (Wu 2019). However, when we say ‘deliver’, we still presume a civilised and advanced method to ‘help’ those unhealthy others. In this chapter, I provide the ‘scaling up’ parts of the study to give a general picture of healthcare practice in indigenous communities and the difficulties of health interventions. In the following chapters, I scale out the study to broaden the understanding of drinking practices that have been interwoven in the web of interpersonal/interethnic relationships, environmental factors and political/socioeconomic forces. Otherwise, we will be far behind the completion of the work of decolonisation before we carefully examine indigenous people’s contemporary lives when it comes to unstable and uncertain culture and structures regarding the entangled colonial situation.

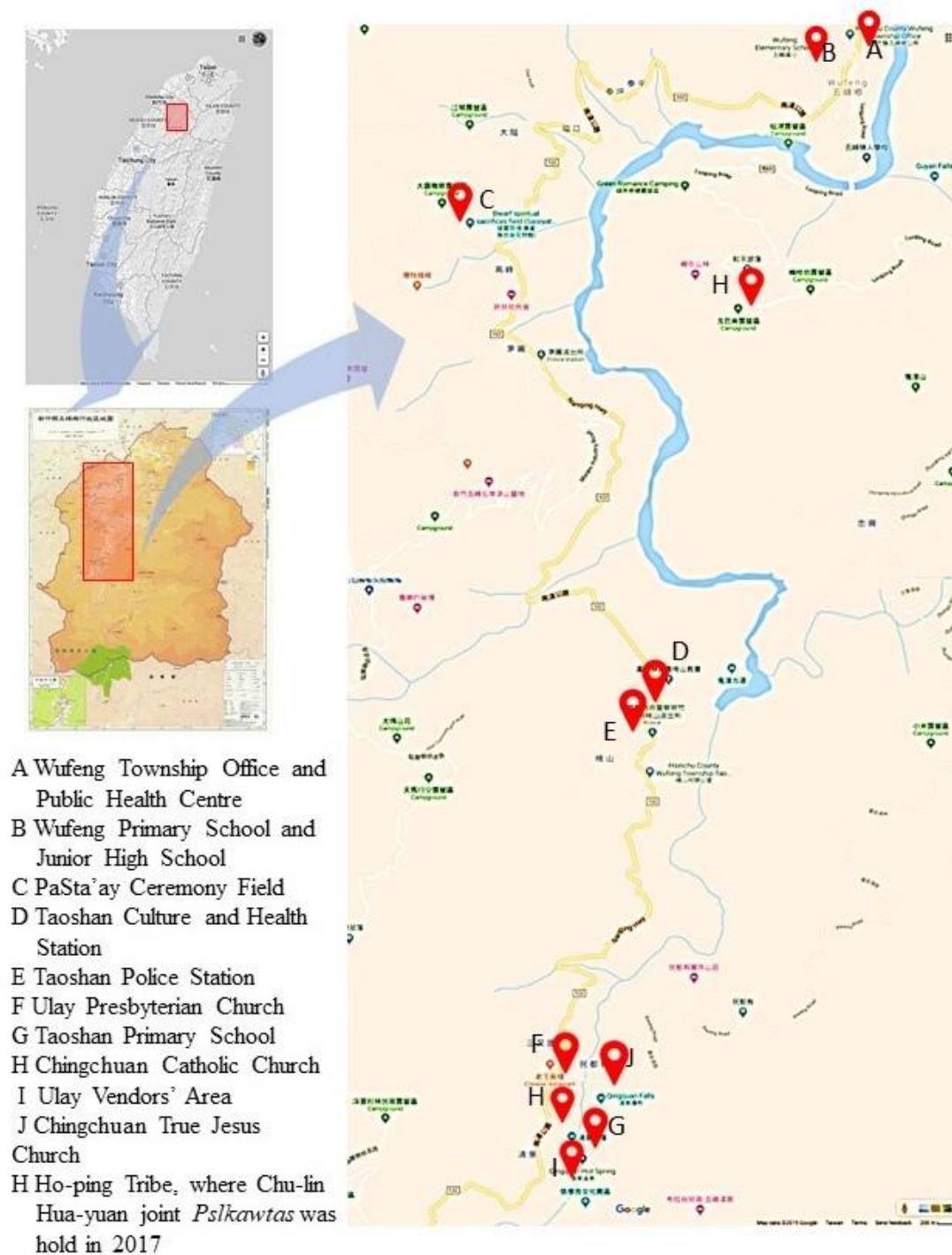


Figure 3. 6 The map of Wufeng Township, with the sites that the researcher visited added.

## 4. Stigma and Stereotype

Following reflections on the institutionalised health delivery strategies in Chapter 3, I begin this chapter by discussing the stigma that exists around indigenous people's alcohol use, taking examples of jokes from TV programmes or social media to discuss the stereotype of excessive drinking. Furthermore, I introduce the current picture of indigenous communities' moral worlds, juxtaposing examples of how indigenous communities value and react to the stigma of alcohol use. Drinking is practised between abstinence and indulgence. A common phenomenon of 'street heroes' in indigenous villages may have reinforced the stigma of alcoholism but reflects specific moral worlds of indigenous groups. 'Street heroes' means people who lie in the road after binge drinking, unafraid of traffic.

Although indigenous societies generally show more tolerance to alcohol use in Taiwan, there are still concepts related to inappropriate drinking. I use the example of Wufeng Township to talk about Atayal people's general attitudes toward alcohol, and how they generate or perceive negative criticism regarding alcohol use. Finally, I introduce the government's historical policy of alcohol monopoly and producing alcohol reserved for highlands. Such policies lead to a tremendous change in drinking styles. However, there is a prevailing attitude of blaming the policies among indigenous elites since they think this is where stereotypes come from. Also, because of such untrustworthiness toward the government, indigenous people show more resistance to health governance.

## 4.1 Joking About Drinking

An indigenous man was drinking ‘*xiao-mi-jiu*’ (小米酒)<sup>23</sup> with a long straw.

He was asked, ‘Why do you do that?’

‘Because my doctor asked me to keep away from alcohol!’

—A Taiwanese joke

During 2014-2015, I was assigned as a clinical tutor in a local hospital, supervising junior doctors for their postgraduate year training course in community medicine. A group of trainees who tried to survey the prevalence of substance use in an indigenous society presented their end-of-term report, citing this joke in their first slide. This joke reminds me of a picture I received from a health care staff’s social media group. The picture (Figure 4. 1) shows a bottle of rice wine with a blue line between the two Chinese characters, ‘rice’ (mi 米) and ‘wine’ (jiu 酒). The caption reads: ‘The secret to not getting drunk for indigenous people. How to prevent yourself from getting drunk? Drink until the level reaches the word “rice”; below the word ‘rice’ is wine.’

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<sup>23</sup> ‘*Xiao-mi-jiu*’ (小米酒), the Chinese Mandarin term for traditionally brewed alcoholic drinks in Taiwanese indigenous communities. Made of millet, basically used in sacred rituals, they have various names between different indigenous ethnicities.



Figure 4. 1 A supposedly humorous picture shows the secret to not getting drunk for indigenous people.

These jokes all imply that indigenous people can drink a lot. As a clinical tutor, I found it difficult to point out the problems with the joke, such as its racist overtones, but also reflect the fact of the high prevalence of alcohol use, as reported in epidemiological studies. According to my observation, the narrative that indigenous people are good at drinking is debatable among indigenous groups. Some would firmly dispute this, but others would self-deprecatingly accept it. The divergent attitudes to stereotypes or stigma reflect the complicated values and meanings of indigenous people's drinking practices, which are worth further exploration.

'Indigenous people are good at drinking' is a common stereotype in Taiwan. Regular news about social events related to alcohol use generates negative impressions about indigenous people's drinking practices. Media outlets also continuously stress the exotic styles of drinking practised by indigenous people. This reinforces the stigma surrounding drinking while at the same time glorifying it. Taiwanese people are no strangers to media outlets continuously conveying such

stereotypes. However, it has become so common that people are accustomed to it and fail to feel annoyed or infuriated. Take the example of TV shows such as the famous comedy talk show ‘The Gang of Kuo Kuan’(國光幫幫忙), which is very popular among adolescents (Figure 4. 2). The show featured an episode called ‘Shouting Back from Indigenous Beauties’<sup>24</sup> which invited several indigenous women, regarded as ‘beautiful’ (conventionally attractive women are one of the selling points of the show, which objectifies women) to talk about their everyday life experience of such stereotypes. ‘Are indigenous people really good at drinking?’ happened to be one of the topics. Here is a short extract from the TV show:

When the host asked the indigenous guest to say hello using their native language, a Tsou<sup>25</sup> woman replied ‘*Aveoveoyx!*’

‘Did you have one or two cups of drink already?’ asks the host. Perhaps he thinks Tsou’s greeting sounds interesting.

When the host started to ask whether indigenous people are good at drinking, an Atayal woman said, ‘I used to be sober all the time until some friends asked me to drink. They say, “Aren’t you indigenous people good at drinking?” Then I had my first drink. After a couple of glasses, I still felt fine.’

However, not all the indigenous guests loved drinking. When the host asked the guest how much they can drink, a Kanakanav woman quickly replied that she is not good at drinking. However, other guests, one Amis and another Paiwan, said that the Kanakanav woman was lying. ‘You look like you’re good at drinking’, the Paiwan guest said.

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<sup>24</sup> For a video clip of the show visit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t9JsOVZdP8k&t=105s>

<sup>25</sup> The Tsou are an Austronesian indigenous people from central southern Taiwan. Tsou people are traditionally based in the Alishan Township area but have now settled in wider territory across Nantou and Chiayi County.



Although the show was designed to dispel misconceptions about indigenous people, the conversation among the hosts and the guests still served to perpetuate commonly held stereotypes of indigenous groups regarding alcohol use. The show stigmatises indigenous people by treating them as bodies that can tolerate large amounts of alcohol, and deliberately links these exotic characters with alcohol use. However, their self-deprecation and mutual ridicule reflect the reality of interethnic relationships in Taiwan.



Figure 4. 2 A screenshot from the comedy talk show 'The Gang of Kuo Kuan' that reinforces stereotypes of indigenous people's alcohol use. (Retrieved on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2019 from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t9JsOVZdP8k>)

## 4.2 The Songs

*Baimijiu, I love you,*

*Nothing else is stronger than you.*

*I fancy you; I'm crazy for you,*

*You captivate me.*

*One shot after another, I don't care,*

*Nobody can stop me.*

*I am drunk; nobody cares about me,*

*One after another, until thousands more, and one more cup!*

—A popular ‘*linbanke*’ (林班歌)

Originally written in Chinese,<sup>26</sup> translated by Yi-Cheng Wu

In 2010, an indigenous musical called ‘*Hen jiu mei you jing wo le ni*’ (很久沒有敬我了你), meaning ‘You Haven’t Cheered with Me with a Drink for a Long Time’, was put on at the National Concert Hall for three nights. The English title of the show was ‘On the Road’, as the musical represented the indigenous people’s life experience of moving (Figure 4. 3). The sold-out show brought the house down and was the first time most of the singers from an indigenous village had travelled to Taipei. At the end of the show, a *Pinuyumayan* singer, Chiachia, performed a famous song called ‘*Baimijiu*’<sup>27</sup> as the encore, with a beautiful melody and sad lyrics: ‘I am drunk, nobody cares about me, one after another, until thousands, and one more cup!’

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<sup>26</sup> 白米酒，我愛你 / 沒有人能夠比你強 / 我為你癡迷，為了你瘋狂，你真教人如此著迷 / 一杯一杯，我不介意 / 沒有人能夠阻止我 / 我醉了醉了，沒有人理我 / 千杯萬杯再來一杯 [*qian bei wan bei zai lai yi bei*]

<sup>27</sup> For the video clip visit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-8Ksd-R81aQ>

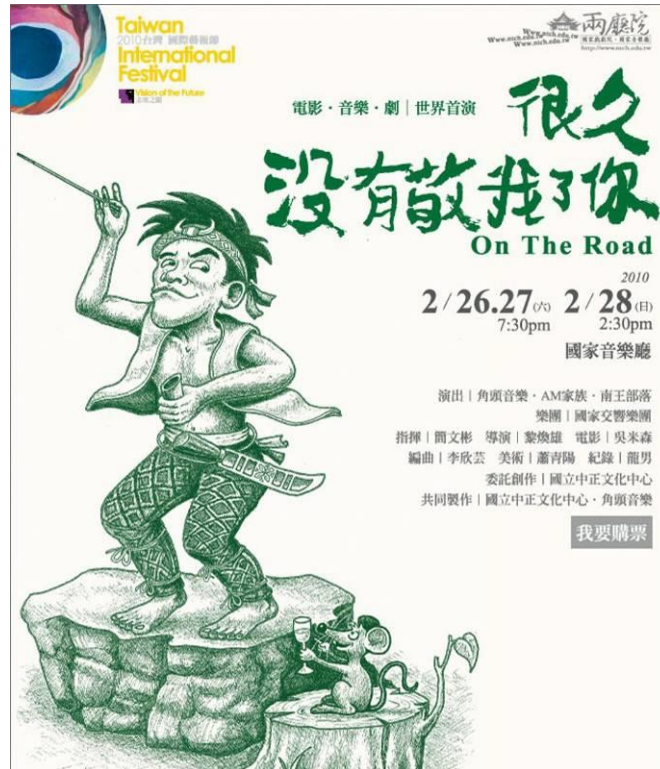


Figure 4. 3 The poster for the musical 'On the Road'.

'Baimijiu' is a popular 'Shan-Di' (山地) song among indigenous communities, and has been facetiously regarded as the 'national anthem' for Taiwanese indigenous people, 'drinking' having been viewed as the iconic past of indigenous culture, although 'culture' here is difficult to define. There are a lot of songs like 'Baimijiu', which are sung in Mandarin Chinese, accompanied by a homesick mood. They are called 'linbanke' (林班歌), which means the song (*ke*) written for 'linban'<sup>28</sup> or workers. From 1950 to 1970, under the policy of increasing foreign exchange income by exporting precious wood, indigenous young men were largely employed to work in the mountains<sup>29</sup> as woodcutters. They began to sing songs, mostly written in Chinese, to express their suffering.

<sup>28</sup> 'Linban' is a small unit for the demarcation of forest lands.

<sup>29</sup> See Chapter 6.2.3.

The main themes of those ‘*Shan-Di*’ songs are very different from the traditional hymns that praise gods or ancestors. The lyrics of these songs always show the bitterness and sorrow of ‘displacement’:

*My Dad and Mum asked me to go wandering*

*Tears on my face while I was wandering to Taipei*

*Cannot find a proper job*

*Tears come out when I think of my lover*<sup>30</sup>

Taiwanese literary scholar Kuo-Chao Huang (2010) points out that *Shan-Di* music (mountain folk music) is an important social and cultural phenomenon that reflects the dynamics of symbolic power in Taiwan. The lyrics of these songs were written straightforwardly without polishing. Taiwanese historian Shih-fan Yang (2012) uses this song as an example to show historicity in the era of mobility and diasporas. Most of the songwriters are anonymous, and the songs were passed down orally or disseminated through the ‘cassette culture’ that arose in the 1980s (Chen 2013).

Another iconic song related to alcohol is ‘Role Models of Youth’(模範青年), which shows contrasting moral attitudes toward alcohol use:

*First don’t drink, second don’t smoke, and third don’t chew the betel nuts. Be a good and honest young man.*

*Let’s cheers if you like to have a drink. You can have 38 or 58.*

*I wish you remember what I have told you.*

*I will always love you.*

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<sup>30</sup> 我的爸爸媽媽叫我去流浪 / 我一面走一面掉眼淚 流浪流淚流浪到臺北 / 找不到理想的工作想起了遠方的心上人 / 我就馬上掉眼淚

This song was filmed in the propaganda film of the *Jiejiu* project to show indigenous people's alcoholic lifeworld. In the film, indigenous people in Namasia sit around a table under a sheet metal tent, drinking through the night. The song adapts common messages from the psychoeducation sessions, which encourage indigenous people to stop using substances that threaten their health. However, the theme of the song changes soon after those 'doctrines' of health governance by embracing liquor, telling people not to forget the words of their elders.

The elders' words remind me of what an Atayal informant told me about the ritual before the separation of the household:

*'When the ritual begins, we have to salt the pork and cook the sticky rice first. The father would say something like this: "It is because of me that you can have the fortune today", and then also count [his children's] offences. All these things would be expressed on the day of separation. The father would share salt with all his sons; the sons would put the salt in the containers of their own households. The salt is meant to smooth things over and reconcile.'*

The ritual is part of *Pslkawtas* (see 5.3.2). While the father counts all his children's good fortunes or offences, family members apologise to each other. In this sense, millet wine is used as a medium for catharsis. In that case, the song 'Role Models of Youth' is just like a modern form of ritual, mimicking the way elders address young men leaving home.

Since the late 1980s, more indigenous singers have become popular in Taiwan. Indigenous stars are famous for their voices and defined features. Most of them only sing Chinese songs rather than using their native languages, though they have started to include their life experiences in their song lyrics. Amis

singer Chang Chen-Yue (A-Yue 張震嶽) is among the most famous. In 1997, he released an album called *This boring afternoon*, which features a song called ‘*he jiu*’ (喝酒), meaning drinking:

*Give me one more drink; I'm happy to have that*  
*My name is Chang Chen-Yue*  
*My father is a police officer; my mother does nothing*  
*My sister... Who knows what she is doing*  
*I tell you, don't be too sad*  
*There is no need for unrequited love with a flower*  
*Drink it, the endless rice wine*  
*Forget all the unhappiness.*

Although the singer expresses the relatable experience of heartbreak, this state of boredom represents the life situation of an urban indigenous family that is far from their hometown. Drinking has become his coping mechanism for the unhappiness in his everyday life.

In 2013, A-Yue changed his name to his Amis name Ayal Komod,<sup>31</sup> and released an album called ‘*I am Ayal Komod*’. Since then, he has been singing his own life stories. The song *Jiugui* (酒鬼) reads:

*Push myself, myself, to the edge of nihilism*  
*Look into, into, the border of the dream and the reality*  
*They say I am drunk, and dump me*

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<sup>31</sup> Ayal Komod is an Amis rock musician, previously known by his Chinese name, Chang Chen-yue (A-Yue). Many of his songs are related to the theme of drinking, which reflects indigenous life circumstances. One of his albums is called ‘*Malasang*’ which means ‘being drunk’ in Amis.

*At the roadside. I was so haggard. Oh!*

The Chinese song title is *Jiugui* (酒鬼), with the combined Amis-English word *Lasang Basterd* as its subheading (*Lasang* means drunk). The song once again portrays a life of awkwardness, however Ayat Komod has become an activist to advocate for indigenous rights and proudly addresses indigenous identity in his real life. He defended his statement that '*Ilisin* (the Amis harvest festival) equals giving life to drink' on social media. He also proposed to protect land rights at a music awards ceremony.

Taiwanese musicologist Chen Chun-bin argues that the hybridity of indigenous music should be understood as a postmodern process of 'adjustment' rather than be subject to racist critiques of 'inauspicious hybridization' leading to 'cultural degeneration' (Chen 2013: 61-90). This argument to some extent lays the groundwork for my further exploration of this question: have indigenous people's drinking practices moved from a sacred phase into a secular one?

'I love you, *Baimijiu*' has become one of the most popular songs among indigenous singers who perform in city pubs or local art centres. Many singers are also activists who were important figures in indigenous rights movements, or are still active in rallies and various other protests. In 2018, the original cast of the indigenous musical 'You Haven't Cheered with Me for a Long Time' returned to the stage of a newly opened performance hall, Weiwuying National Kaohsiung Center for the Arts. Again, 'I love you, *Baimijiu*' was the encore song. From self-mocking to self-identifying, indigenous people's singing practices transform interpretations of drinking, making it problematic to interpret drinking purely as an unhealthy behaviour. Clearly, the practice has more complex meanings.

### **4.3 ‘He is just sleeping; he will wake up later’**

#### **4.3.1 Between ‘Wet’ and ‘Dry’**

It is difficult to draw a line between to drink or not to drink for indigenous people in Taiwan because of the dynamic and shifting values associated with alcohol use. Although excessive drinking is more likely to be perceived as normal in indigenous communities, it does not mean all drinking patterns are acceptable. Indigenous people do have ways of evaluating the appropriateness of drinking. Still, in contrast to standardised medicalised diagnoses, indigenous people show more dynamic and intersubjective logic in terms of valuing drinking patterns.

Like many other places elsewhere in the world, Atayal society and many other indigenous groups can be categorised as ‘wet’ or ‘dry’, as scholars have suggested (Room 2001:193; Gamburd 2008:82). There are various reasons for people to choose whether to make drinking part of their everyday lifestyle or not, and people may be categorised based on this. In Taiwanese indigenous communities, the church plays a critical role in regulating people’s drinking. For example, drinking is strictly prohibited by the True Jesus Church, while the Catholic Church perhaps tolerates drinking at the most. However, religion is not the only constraint. Parenting and the passing on of values around alcohol use contributes much to an individual’s attitude toward drinking. Education sessions take place on both formal and informal occasions. Health workers try to explain the hazardous effects of alcohol when facing patients who have chronic diseases, like liver disease or gout. However, doctors and teachers are tired of repeatedly preaching medical knowledge (see Chapter 3.3.1 Local health practitioners).



In wet societies, drinking is a common recreational and social practice. People neglect the age limit to sell and buy drink; parents and grandparents ask children to buy alcohol in local grocery stores. Shop owners sometimes allow villagers who do not have enough money to buy drink on credit. Store account records may be written on the walls of the shops so everybody can see without judgement. The shop owners, who have higher economic status in the villages, allow poor villagers to pay in labour as a reciprocal practice, which has always been prevalent in a mutual aid society.

By contrast, non-drinkers see drinking as the violation of the biblical doctrines. They follow Corinthians 6:10: 'Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.' People who attend different churches may privately complain others' religious faith is adulterated but do not openly criticise each other. Although there is a spectrum of Christian religions with different attitudes towards alcohol use, drinking is a critical issue by which to determine a person's moral defects.

#### **4.3.2 Street Heroes**

*'Miaoli Hospital recently proposed an intervention programme of 'Moderate Drinking and Accident Prevention'. Ten volunteers and 30 families took part in it, with 25 people abstinent from alcohol already. The chief of Meiyuan happily said that fewer 'street heroes' have been seen since the plan was pushed forward.'*

20<sup>th</sup> October 2009, Liberty Times

*‘Lots of people are addicted to alcohol in indigenous highland villages, and it is common to see them pass out on the streets and stop traffic, while people tease them as ‘street heroes’. The Shuanglong village in Hsinyi Township, Nantou, has been listed at the top of the billboard; there are about 20 ‘street heroes’ in this buluo.’*

26<sup>th</sup> April 2011, China Times

‘Street heroes’ has been used as the label for indigenous people who get drunk and pass out in the street. Compared to urban people’s drinking style, in indigenous communities people frequently drink openly outdoors during the daytime. ‘Sky as the tent, land as the bed’ is a saying that was originally used to describe a chivalrous Chinese figure but which has been adapted to mark out indigenous people’s drinking style. Several of my indigenous informants also use this term to relate their heroic and generous personalities.



Figure 4. 4 A drunken man lying on his stomach on the roadside in Wufeng.

When I was doing fieldwork in Wufeng in November 2018, a sports event was held in Taoshan Primary School to celebrate its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. It was a big event in the village that many young people came back to their hometown to celebrate. Happiness was in the air. It was not strange to see vendors bringing beers to their

stalls surrounding the sports field. However, on the road leading to the school, a man lay on his stomach at the roadside (Figure 4. 4). I got out of my car to check his vital signs as I always do as a physician. A tourist also looked anxiously at him and called the police. The man was lying in front of the grocery store, but nobody got out to have a look. Some adolescents gathered at the pavilion at the roadside, drinking. When I asked them about what happened to the young man, they replied ‘He is just sleeping; he will wake up later.’

This scene reminded me of a picture. Twenty years earlier, a magazine called ‘Hope’ published a picture that showed a middle-aged Amis man lying on the ground with an empty bottle beside him (Figure 4. 5). The first medical humanities magazine, ‘Hope’ in Taiwan was organised by clinicians and scholars who showed great concern for medical issues under the one-party state regime. Its sponsor, Foundation of Medical Professionals Alliance in Taiwan, was one of the famous NGOs that supported Taiwan’s independence.



Figure 4. 5 A picture in a magazine called ‘Hope’. The caption reads ‘Mr. Li, a 65-year-old tuberculosis patient. When I first met him, he shouted: “Haun-a, m-bat-ji” in Taiwanese, which means “illiterate barbarian”, and was a little tipsy. After drinking through the night, he laid down on the road until noon the next day.’

The picture was taken in 1988 by Hsin-Chu Yen, a photographer and grass-roots activist, in Sioulin Township. The black and white photo was in the style of reportage photography, showing the tragic lives of indigenous people, Sioulin being an impoverished township well-known for young girls being sold into human trafficking.<sup>32</sup> The photo suggests the man's intoxication is the result of poverty and lack of medical resources.

#### 4.3.3 Primal scenes

Many people I encountered in my fieldwork had ideas about doing something after being overwhelmed by scenes witnessed in their home villages.<sup>33</sup> Some had become grassroots activists, while others had taken part in the cultural revival movement or devoted themselves to education. Liking, one of my key Atayal informants in Wufeng, told me what she saw when she first came back to her home village. As an activist who had been taking part in the indigenous movement, she took what she had witnessed as a starting point to make a change. She told me:

*'I left home when I attended the primary school out of the town. When I grew up and came back in my teenage years, I often saw old people lying at the roadside, or walking unsteadily with bottles in their hands. That made me feel bad.'*

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<sup>32</sup> Sioulin Township is an indigenous township of Hualien County, Taiwan. It is located northwest of Hualien City, and is the largest township in Taiwan by area. It has a population of approximately 16,000 people, most of whom are Truku people. During the 1980s and 90s, there were reports of missing teenage girls, many of them forced into prostitution by human traffickers. Truku people have been losing their lands since they were occupied by the government for military use, and also by a cement company. Today, the Truku people still campaign against Asia Cement Corporation's occupying traditional territories.

<sup>33</sup> I use the heading 'primal scene' to indicate the experience of witnessing drunken people lying on the roads that causes feelings of shock and confusion. It is a psychoanalytic term, indicating the initial witnessing by a child of their parents' sex act, causing psychological trauma. This term has been adapted by Angela Garcia (2010:43-48) who studied addiction in New Mexico, describing her first encounter at her fieldsite when she arrived at a drug detox clinic.

Liking is an Atayal woman who has devoted herself to the indigenous movement for more than 20 years and originally returned to Wufeng to organise local grass-roots activities in 1994. Like a ‘primal scene’, the term Freud uses to explain the initial witness that causes psychological trauma that cannot be entirely comprehended in childhood but develops into an adult neurosis, that overwhelming scene of elderly people lying on the road became Liking’s obsession while she contemplated the situation of indigenous people.

I met Liking for the first time when I was serving as a psychiatrist while taking part in the *jiejiu* plan. During those years I talked to her a lot. She introduced herself with a self-disclosure that she was suffering from sleep disturbance after a typhoon. She built a leisure resort with her partner in Mintuyu *buluo*, but the resort was destroyed by Typhoon Aere, which took more than 20 Wufeng villagers’ lives in 2004 (Figure 4. 6). During the years in Wufeng, she organised the villagers to fight against the establishment of the incinerator and teamed up with local people to protect their river. The most important mission for the indigenous rights movement that Liking ever initiated was a cultural revival. She was one of the activists who promoted *Pslkawtas*, a ritual which had been suspended for decades due to the opposition of the churches. However, she often complained about the villagers being unable to unite.



Figure 4. 6 The Wufeng villagers leave a glass of rice wine and light a cigarette at the memorial monument for victims of Typhoon Aere every day.

Laling is another grassroots activist who lives in Ulay *Buluo* in Wufeng. He takes part in numerous demonstrations in Wufeng, including asking for the removal of the checkpoints that were set up during the period of martial law, and opposing the local developmental cases that use the Build–Operate–Transfer model<sup>34</sup>. When I first met Laling, he lit a cigarette and treated me to a glass of Paolyta. When asked about why he came back to Ulay, he first mentioned his father, a hunter who lost his hunting land and now drinks a lot:

<sup>34</sup> According to the explanation by the Taiwan Ministry of Finance, BOT is one of the PPP (Private Participation in Infrastructure Projects) models. The essence of BOT is that ‘the government allows a private institution to invest in the building and operation of an infrastructure project and upon expiration of the operation period, the ownership of the infrastructure is transferred to the government.’ (Retrieved from <https://www.mof.gov.tw/eng/singlehtml/308?cntId=71709> Date: 12<sup>th</sup> March, 2021)

*'I repeatedly dreamed about hunting. My father was a great hunter, he knew much about Gaga. I have learned a lot from him. Then, I finally realised that a hunter's world is very different from the world that we currently think of as it is.'*

'*Buluo*-ism'<sup>35</sup> is Laling's core belief that all public issues should be discussed with the informed consent of the local villagers. *Buluo*-ism is translated from the Mandarin term *Bu luo zhu yi* (部落主義), which is proposed by indigenous activists as their movement strategy, calling for grass-roots power for indigenous communities (Rau and Florey 2007:143). Some people use 'tribalism' as an English translation of the Chinese term. However, unlike the term used by sociologists to describe isolated social networks, 'tribalism' here is proposed by indigenous activists who reflect on the indigenous movement in urban areas (Chuang 2013). Inspired by the indigenous movement during the 1980s, Laling found himself on a mission to become a grass-roots activist who took his homeland as his foundation to fight for the rights of indigenous people, rights of which they had been deprived. For many indigenous activists, the imposition of modern bureaucracy is one of the culprits tearing indigenous societies apart. After retreating from life in the city, Laling started to organise the local youth to take more interest in what was happening in Wufeng Township, including leading Syakaro people to fight against the Township Office (see Chapter 6.1.2). Laling and his wife Wagi also established Ngansan Mu Mountain School to offer alternative education to children in Wufeng. Feeling that indigenous cultural practices were declining, they decided to teach the children traditional life skills such as farming, hunting and planting millet.

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<sup>35</sup> The term *buluo* is derived from the Japanese term '*buraku*' (ぶらぐ, means 'tribe') that is given in colonial during Japan's rule. Currently, *buluo* has neutral meaning which refers to an indigenous community or village. (See the footnote in Chapter 1.1.2)

#### 4.3.4 'It is better to die!'

Goffman (1963:138) argues that 'the normal or stigmatised individuals should not be defined based on their own attributes but rather their perspectives.' This is a fundamental reminder of the way we think of indigenous people's use of alcohol, and that neither pathologising or problematising the matter is quite right.

One day when I was sitting in a waiting area in the Wufeng medical station chatting with the local nurses,<sup>36</sup> an old woman came in smelling strongly of 'Paolyta-B', the popular herbal alcoholic energy drink. She asked for medication for asthma. However, all the people there could see was that she drank too much. The nurse talked to her in Atayal. After a while, the nurse turned to me and said, 'See? That's Atayal people's heartfelt wishes.' 'Atayal's heartfelt wishes?' I asked. 'I told *yaki* ('grandma' in Atayal) not to drink too much, "otherwise, you will die." She replied to me, "It is better to die!"'

'It is better to die' may mean a thousand words. My fieldwork experience always reminds me not to take what we hear in the first moment for granted, for example the *yaki* who wished to die but still walked into a medical station to seek help. A word has its implied and underlying meanings. Those who 'abandon' themselves may be those who do not want to give up. Those 'street heroes' teased by young people may not really be losers in their villages.

There is a comedy-drama named 'The Street Heroes' created by the Paiwan youth of Pacavalj *Buluo* in Taitung that puts the story of poor, drunken elders onstage (Figure 4. 7). The plot of the play is the elders being teased by passersby at the beginning, but finally winning respect from the young people after teaching them to

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<sup>36</sup> People in Wufeng do not sit quietly and wait for the doctor, nor leave the clinic right after consultations, so the waiting area often becomes a public space where people gossip and chat.



sing a traditional song in their mother tongue. The young people ask ‘How would we be here without these old people?’

In Wufeng, people would not categorise drinkers as a specific group who are mentally unhealthy or morally defective. Also, indigenous people already know the harm of alcohol use. Those who drink excessively and pass out in the street and those who would rather stay sober cannot be seen as two groups of people who hold different attitudes toward alcohol. The drinkers and the non-drinkers do not really hold opposed attitudes and knowledge, but they do valorise their roles and decide whether to drink according to the values they hold.



Figure 4. 7 Screenshot from the comedy-drama ‘The Street Heroes’ created by the Paiwan youth of Pacavalj *Buluo* in Taitung. (Retrieved on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2019 from <https://youtu.be/YbJWLEnFwA>)

## 4.4 ‘We are not *Jiugui*’ (drunkards)

### 4.4.1 Masculinity, *Tayal balay* and *tqwau*

Drinking practices are closely related to kinship systems and personhood. There might be a historical background for Atayal men to show masculinity when they drink. In the past, men showed off their achievements by chanting and drinking together. Chanting has been lost for decades but men still drink together on various occasions.

Gender differences are often key factors influencing drinking behaviours. In Atayal societies and many other ethnic groups that have their kinship systems of patrilineality, masculinity is a crucial cultural-psychological reason behind drinking patterns. In one way, drinking practices may be displays of social status and power; in another, frustrations about fulfilling expected gender roles may result in drinking.

In Wufeng, men show their masculinity and the connection of brotherhood through drinking, and adolescents have similar intimate ways of building their circles. Beer cans and cigarette butts can be seen surrounding schools. Buying drinks for others is a common way to establish reciprocity or repay debts. A common saying that I have heard in local public health centres in many indigenous townships is ‘Those who are in the next building drink a lot.’ That is because local public health centres, where the moderate drinking projects are proposed, are often located next to the township offices. Township offices are where public affairs are discussed and managed, while public servants may need to drink socially for businesses.

Township office staff and their outsourcing personnel drink socially in local shops, restaurants and karaoke bars. Working-class labourers may drink together at some open area near grocery stores or the pavilions at the roadside. People who lie in the road after drinking are not interrupted unless they shout or make trouble in the street. Police officers may come to persuade troublemakers to calm down or take them to the police station for a rest. The drinkers seldom receive penalties unless something serious happens, like severe injuries or fatal accidents. Domestic violence may be seen as merely a family affair.

Since drinking has become a social norm, interventions based on scientific rationality may stir the local identity and cause stigmatising effects. In my preliminary

study (Wu 2019:234), I describe the emergence of the stigma related to intervention in alcohol use:

‘*Jiejiuban* (the moderate drinking project members) were expected to be sober when they came to work in the morning. Thus, they would stop drinking to pass the breath test to save their jobs. However, withdrawal symptoms rendered them physically weak, thus reinforcing the effects of stigma, as male participants were scorned as being “not real men.” Moreover, the psychiatric evaluation the participants were forced to undergo and the resulting status as “patients” added another level of stigma. As previously mentioned, local collaborators recruited light drinkers rather than “real alcoholics” to ensure farm productivity. Therefore, in the second year of the project, clinical sessions ceased and were replaced by a focus group due to the low usage rate of the clinic and participants rejecting their “sick” role. Participants openly discussed their feelings in the group and shared that they felt troubled as *jiejiuban* because they did not regard themselves as “*jiugui*” (酒鬼), a Mandarin Chinese term that combines *jiǔ* (酒, alcohol) and *guǐ* (鬼, ghost).’

This quote explains that the amount of drinking is nothing to do with moral judgement but what counts is the condition to become a complete person. Take Atayal people, for example. The phrase *Tayal balay* is used to define ‘a real man’ who follows *Gaga*, takes responsibility and becomes what he is meant to be. Men who drink excessively will not fail to become *Tayal balay* unless they really violate social constraints. However, in a patrilineal society, men may feel frustrated more easily if they fail to take social responsibility.

In Atayal words, a person who is considered to drink inappropriately is called *tqwau* or *tbusuq*. *Qwau* means alcoholic drinks and *busuq* means being drunk.

Currently, people use the Mandarin Chinese term ‘*jiugui*’ to refer to *tqwau* or *tbusuq*. As previously mentioned, ‘*jiugui*’ combines two words, *jiǔ* (酒, alcohol) and *guǐ* (鬼, ghost), but it does not refer to supernatural spirits, just the status of being a drunkard. However, that status is not fixed but in flux. In Atayal grammar, *tqwau* or *tbusuq* is more like an adjective than a noun. From this perspective, linguistically speaking, when compared to Mandarin Chinese, Atayal people would not label *tbusuq* as a personal moral defect. However, despite the sayings that may be incommensurable between the different languages, Atayal people would still use the Chinese term ‘*Jiugui*’, which may reinforce the stigma.

Heavy drinkers may start to binge drink due to frustration, particularly when they feel unable to undertake family responsibility. Some binge drinking may be accompanied by physical violence inflicted on other family members. However, this kind of behaviour is accumulated little by little. I asked the villagers when people start to drink and answers mostly fall between the early school age to adolescent. The boys learn how to drink at school age, and junior high school is a critical period. Since students start to face the pressure of whether to continue study or leave school for employment, they experience more frustration. A nurse told me what she had witnessed:

‘Once I was on my way home after work, I saw some primary school students drinking together. I asked them “What the hell are you doing?” One of them answered, “We are just celebrating.” “For what?” I asked. The boy pointed at one of his friends and said, “To celebrate that he is going to be punished later!”’

The building up of this brotherhood by drinking together starts quite early, and it is difficult to differentiate the positive or negative psychological mechanism. Drinking together apparently shows masculinity but also reveals suppressed suffering.

#### **4.4.2 Women, the light drinkers**

Compared to men, indigenous women show relatively passive attitudes toward drinking. Their stories of alcohol use reflect hard life situations bound to kinship and social structures. During the fieldwork, I visited some *jiejiuban* members who took part in the Hsinchu Mackay Memorial Hospital's launch of a moderate drinking project, and realised that female drinkers share similar situations. Sometimes, women drink under pressure. According to my informants, because women's social status is traditionally inferior to the men's, women may be forced to become drinkers. Some female informants shared a similar experience that they were asked to drink to show their loyalty to their husband's families. Some may binge drink due to specific psychological distress, such as grief due to losing loved ones or domestic violence. Most of the women tried not to drink too much, not because they want to maintain their public images, but because they must take responsibility as the master of the house since many men have to work away from home. In recent decades, along with women's changing social status, women hold more authority to refuse to drink. However, there are also increasing female gatherings with beer and Paolyta-B. This is recreational too, as well a way to build up connections with reciprocity.

When I was doing fieldwork in Wufeng, I revisited some women who had been taking part in *jiejiuban*. They do not feel they have a drinking problem, but joined the project to make money. Below are my conversations with them. I conducted the

interview in Chinese, so the conversations were reorganised and simplified and emphasis was added.

YJ,<sup>37</sup> 35, has two sons, who are the centre of her life. Her major health concern was physical pain, and in particular headaches. She complained that drinking causes headaches so she has to take painkillers frequently.

*YJ: My family members, my aunt, for example, she has hypertension, and headaches, too. And they all drink as well. We drink whenever we have a family reunion. [We drink] beer and Paolyta. We have a merry time but will have headaches the next day.*

I asked her how headaches affect her life.

*YJ: It makes me not able to take care of my kids properly. Like tidying things up or teaching the kids the homework. Sometimes my husband will give me a hand, but other family members just blame me that I did not practice 'zuoyuezi' well.*

YC: How has your spiritual life, faith or religious practice helped you go through this difficult period of your life?

*YJ: I'm from a Catholic family. However, religion is not really helpful for me.*

Apparently, YJ could not express her physical discomfort after drinking. Her family blame her by using the excuse of *zuoyuezi* (坐月子, sitting the month), a Chinese traditional practice of postpartum confinement following childbirth, as the reason why YJ got her headache. It is said that women may suffer physical problems if they do not follow the rules of *zuoyuezi*.

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<sup>37</sup> I use anonymised abbreviations of their names here.

HM, 42, was working as a cleaner in another leisure farm, which is open to tourists who want to experience the local lifestyle. HM was living in Wufeng before the sixth grade of primary school but moved out to Chutung with her parents until she returned to Wufeng for her current job. Her father worked in iron wirework, and her mother worked in a factory. HM had always worked as a cleaner and factory worker and has been married for 26 years. She also mentioned the pressure from the clan.

*'I used to drink, too. Now I have quit for four years. I did not drink too much. Only three cans of beer a day. I drank whenever friends came to visit me. Now have I stopped drinking since I don't want to become my kids' burden. However, there is someone who still drinks a lot in my family. That is my husband. He has gout, diabetes and hypertension, but he does not want to quit. He said, since he has been feeling hopeless, why does he have to quit?'*

I asked HM what would happen if she stopped drinking:

*'My father in law said that I should practise drinking. I was 19 when my second child was born. I said I could have a little bit; he said that was not enough. Then I had more and more. He trained my sister in law to drink as well. He said that I did not respect him if I refused to drink. Now I use tea to replace the drink. I go to the hospital regularly to check my blood pressure.'*

To explore the subjective experience related to substance use or mental health issues, social scientists use the notion of an ecological niche to highlight one's special cultural, economic and historical context (Bronfenbrenner 1979; Worthman 2010; Gruenewald 2007; Singh 2013). The interviews show the niches of lifeworlds that

determine perspectives on physical distress, which contributes to a deeper understanding of indigenous people's situations and clarifies gendered perspectives on drinking. Although these Atayal women dispute the labels placed on them, they all live in situations in which it is difficult to avoid alcohol use.

The standards to measure the appropriate ways and quantities in which to drink are dynamic in indigenous communities. People negotiate the stigma based on the valorisation of their roles and identities. However, if the identity of 'indigenous people' is addressed, whether they are considered wet or dry, people hold a common opinion: they would unanimously say 'We indigenous people do not drink that much.'

#### **4.5 Blaming the governors**

In studies of medical history and global health, the sentiment of blame during epidemics can be noted among the affected populations, as public attempts to take action in predicaments (Neilkin and Gilman 1991; Farmer 2006; Roy et al. 2020). Such a collective sentiment of blaming is also prominent among indigenous elites in Taiwan. Although indigenous people generally tend not to problematise or pathologise alcohol use, some indigenous elites, mostly pastors or social activists, still consider drinking a problem. They dispute the stereotype of alcoholism but accept the fact that alcohol is detrimental to their people's health and brings misfortune. They are reluctant to criticise people but blame the colonisers' policies. The two things they mention the most are the alcohol monopoly and alcohol reserved for the highlands.



#### 4.5.1 The alcohol monopoly

Studies have argued that indigenous people have moved from a sacred phase into a secular one due to the alcohol monopoly policy, which regulates the state-sanctioned brewery of alcoholic beverages and retailing monopoly (Hsia 2010; Chen 2014). In this section, I describe the experience of a ‘treasure hunt’ to find the anecdotal wine of ‘*Shan di zhuan yong*’ (山地專用, alcohol preserved for the highlanders), and discuss indigenous people’s current attitudes towards the historical monopoly policy.

State monopoly policies for tobacco and alcohol have existed since the Japanese colonial era. However, the KMT government enforced the policy even more strictly to raise income tax after taking over the state-owned manufacturer and distributor of cigarettes and alcohol from Japan. An old government document stressing economics over health reads as follows:

The Monopoly Bureau and the monopoly policy are nothing to do with human health. Without the Monopoly Bureau, there must be people still making wine and cigarettes. Also, the health effects of wines and cigarettes are individuals’ business; there is nothing related to the existence of the Monopoly Bureau. If no one smokes or drinks, what effects can there be even if the Monopoly Bureau is still there? Thus, the state’s monopoly policy is nothing to do with human health. It is irrelevant. (Wu, n.d. circa 1950-60)

In Chapter Three, I mentioned that at the IDS Conference an Atayal community leader was invited to give a short talk (See 3.3.2 IDS Conference). Although he sincerely thanked the medical professionals at the conference, part of his talk is worth considering in more detail:

*'I was found to have liver disease. The doctor asked me "How much have you drunk that made your liver turn like this?" I felt ashamed, but I said, "I don't drink actually. I just kept working for my family and my people; sometimes, I had only one meal during a day [...]. In our village, we don't sell cigarettes and alcohol from the Taiwan Tobacco and Wine Monopoly Bureau (the predecessor of Taiwan Tobacco & Liquor Corporation) in our tribal shops. We Atayal are not an ethnic group that like to drink. We care about our health, too. If any one of you considers visiting us, we welcome you anytime. However, you have to bring your own drinks!'*

Smangus *Tou-mu*,<sup>38</sup> IDS Conference in 2017

Many elder elites blamed the KMT government's monopoly policy implemented in 1945 as one reason for the transformation of drinking from a sacred ritual to everyday consumption. One of my key informants, Pastor Utux, is the pastor of Ulay Presbyterian Church in Wufeng, as well as the chairman of Atayal National Assembly, a Non-Governmental Organisation organised by Atayal elites who seek self-determination. Being one of the typical indigenous elites, this is how he described the wine of '*Shan di zhuan yong*':

*'There must be something special in the ingredients. Why they are stamped as '*Shan di zhuan yong*'? Was there a political purpose for that? Why did they want*

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<sup>38</sup> The Mandarin Chinese term '*Tou-mu*'(頭目) was originally used by Japanese colonisers and scholars. Indigenous groups in Taiwan have various family genealogies and social classifications. '*Tou-mu*' was a general title used to refer to the head of the societies. It can be traced to The Formosan Native Tribes: A Genealogical and Classificatory Study (臺灣高砂族系統所属の研究) launched in the 1920s by Professor Neno zō Utsurikawa (移川子之藏), Nobuto Miyamoto (宮本延人) and Tōichi Mabuchi (馬淵東一) from Taipei Imperial University (台北帝国大学). The use of '*Tou-mu*' may still cause confusion in indigenous societies.

*indigenous people to get used to drinking? I really doubt that. Atayal and Taroko people were the most tenacious group to fight the Japanese. You must have heard about the 'Wushe incident', although many others lack records, like the Mt. Litung incident. They [the Japanese] then gave each household a bronze pot, which is for cooking. When we used them to cook, they would generate poisonous gas that stupefied our people and made them react slowly. The elderly people all told us about that. No wonder, from that period until the start of the KMT's rule, we (Atayal people) hardly had any talented people.'*

(Pastor Utux, Chutung City)

After consulting local people in Wufeng about the anecdote of the wine of 'Shan di zhuan yong', I was directed to Pastor Atung<sup>39</sup> who lives in Cinsbu, Jianshe Township. Unfortunately, Pastor Atung had a severe stroke a few years ago and has suffered from hemiparesis since then. After a four-hour drive to Cinsbu from Hsinchu City, it was foggy and nearing dark when I arrived. Atung's brother, Ataw, welcomed me. When I jumped on his carrier truck, I fastened my seat belt instinctively. Ataw said:

*'We don't fasten the seat belt here. Why? Because if the car turns over, it is easier to jump out.'* 'Are you kidding?' I replied. He continued: *'And we don't wear a safety helmet while riding the motorcycle here, because it would sometimes block the view.'*

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<sup>39</sup> Pastor Atung (born 1954) lives in Cinsbu Tribe. He was a pioneer of indigenous self-determination, and led tribal youth to take part in a series of protest rallies related to indigenous rights, including the 'Return My Land Movement' and the name rectification movement.

That was typical of jokes I often heard in indigenous communities. Jokes such as these create a relaxed mood while expressing their difference and displaying the self-deprecation that reflects their marginalised situations.

Cinsbu *Buluo*, Xiuluan Village, Jianshi Township, is the neighbouring township to Wufeng, but it is even higher in altitude. The Atayal meaning of Cinsbu is ‘the first place that the sunlight shines on in the dawn’. However, it is one of the most remote indigenous villages that is in contact with civilisation. Cinsbu villagers are proud of their solidarity since they have a strong church community. Most villagers in Cinsbu work in organic farming and half of them are now also engaged in the business of tourist accommodation like bed and breakfasts. Unlike most indigenous townships, Ataw told me that ‘the young people all come home to help the business during their holidays.’ And since the development of tourism, there are fewer alcoholics in the village.

#### **4.5.2 Alcohol Reserved for the Highlands**

Ataw took me to an elder’s place. Knowing that I had come for the wine of ‘*Shan di zhuan yong*’, I was introduced to another informant, Losing, who serves as an elder of the congregation in a Christian church. Losing runs a restaurant in the nearby village, Smangus (Xinguang).<sup>40</sup> He displays a lot of traditional agricultural and hunting tools, and some animal skulls hang on the walls of the dining area. Losing proudly picked up his collections, showing me a pile of bottles tied with nylon ropes (Figure 4. 8). He said ‘Look carefully, there are four words on each of them.’ There was mottled printing which read, ‘*Shan di zhuan yong*’, meaning reserved for

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<sup>40</sup> There are two Smangus tribes in Jianshe Township, located at the opposite sides of the Taigang Creek but sharing the same Atayal name. One Smangus is called *Xinguang* in Mandarin Chinese. People in Xinguang belong to the *Knazi* subgroup of Atayal people. The other Smangus, well-known for its Cooperative Model, belongs to the *Mrqwang* subgroup.

the highlands, with the number '15'. Some of the bottles have the date of production, which is the year of Ming Kuo 71 (1982). Losing told me 'We were number 15, and maybe Cinsbu was number 16.' What he meant was the code given by the Monopoly Bureau in order to sell the alcohol that was 'reserved for the highlands'.

After visiting Losing's restaurant, I was invited to his place. He treated me to some home-brewed fruit wine (Figure 4. 9) and explained:

*'This is for a guest. Every time we have just a little. This is absolutely natural, not like those chemical things. There might be poison or some other ingredient.'*

Losing had exactly the same idea as Pastor Utux:

*'Believe it or not, I remember when I was a child, I saw big trucks carrying huge boxes of alcohol driving into our buluo. That's how we were treated.'*

Such an idea, differentiating 'natural' and 'chemical', reflects some indigenous people's blaming the commodification of alcohol and the regulations imposed by the government for their current troubles. To some extent, self-brewed wines are made from very different source materials compared to industrial products. The imagination of impurity reflects indigenous people's loss of sacredness.



Figure 4. 8 ‘*Shan di zhuan yong*’ wine bottles on display in a restaurant in Smangus (Xinguang)



Figure 4. 9 Losing treated me to home-brewed fruit wine (the right glass).

One day during my visit, the villagers held a feast to welcome their guests to the restaurant. They were indigenous elites and scholars who had come to the *buluo* to discuss collaboration plans to restore traditional food storage skills under climate change. After the meal, they gathered at Ataw’s place, sitting around the fire which symbolises the Atayal’s everlasting life, enthusiastically discussing their plan. At that moment, they did not seem to have any intention to open the bottles that had been sealed for decades, and which were covered by dust, to check what was inside. What

they were doing was sitting together, talking together and sharing their blueprints for the future (Figure 4. 10).



Figure 4. 10 People in Cinsbu sit around the fire discussing their food storage plans.

## 4.6 Conclusion

‘The fully and visibly stigmatized, in turn, must suffer the special indignity of knowing that they wear their situation on their sleeve, that almost anyone will be able to see into the heart of their predicament. It is implied, then, that it is not to the different that one should look for understanding our differentness, but to the ordinary.’

Irving Goffman, *Stigma* (1963: 127)

Goffman’s argument about stigma offers an important reflective message to me in reconsidering categorising the drinkers. In my preliminary research in Wufeng, I noticed that the specific moral world of local society may result in invalid interventions. As such, I point out that we may be able to determine the individual experiences of adjustments under various situations by way of understanding what

Goffman (1963) describes as the ‘moral career’ of stigmatised people (Wu 2019). In this chapter, I argue that indigenous people’s ‘drinking practices’ fall between ‘to drink or not to drink’, with no clear boundary between the two. Indigenous people might both be ashamed of and valorise the amount and the way they drink, and the roles they play. Their drinking practices are determined by their moral worlds. That is, by considering morality in a society, we will know the criteria that guide people’s behaviour, the value of their decisions and the orientation of how people interact with each other. Garcia (2014) offers an example of thinking about ‘morality’ within substance users’ life experiences. She considers morality as a mode of living, rather than those theories that relate to codified or law-like rules. We need to pursue more critical understandings of virtuous lives of people who suffer from illnesses and addiction by approaching their moral experiences in everyday life (Kleinman 1998; Das 2012; Garcia 2010, 2014).

Finally, the indigenous elites’ sentiment of blaming the governors does not mean they necessarily accept the narrative that problematises drinking. There is a more subtle psychological defence that reveals indigenous elites’ reluctance to blame their people. In an ethnography describing Aboriginal Australians’s alcohol use, McKnight (2002:209) writes, ‘(Aborigine) Spokesmen are loathe, at least publicly, to blame fellow Aborigines for their misfortunes.’ Although McKnight points out the White colonial governor’s account for the Aboriginal people’s drinking problem, the Aborigines are reluctant to blame themselves even when ‘they well know that they are drinking themselves to death’ (ibid.). Taiwanese indigenous people hold a similar collective sentiment. Such an attitude reflects the resistance to the stigma of alcohol; even though they clearly know the disadvantages of drinking.



## **5. Between Sacred and Secular**

In the previous chapter, I mention drinking patterns that change with the times. The secularisation of drinking has been repeatedly mentioned as the origin of harm to indigenous people's health. Studies indicate the discrepancy between indigenous people's traditional and recreational drinking and smoking patterns (Alderete et al. 2010; Sadik 2014; Seale et al. 2002), yet the boundary between sacred and secular use of these drug foods has been essentialised in health discourse, with the result that recreational use of tobacco has become problematic. However, the boundary between the sacred and secular elements of cultural practices is somehow vague. In this chapter, by looking closely at the specific rituals that are held today, I indicate a blurred boundary between the sacred and secular use of alcohol, even though the forms of drinking practice have altered. During the last half-century, indigenous people have experienced tremendous life changes through rapid modernisation. Growing urbanisation and capitalisation have forced many indigenous people to migrate and move back and forth between their home villages and urban settlements. Traditional culture was thus in decline until the recent climate of cultural revitalisation. In this chapter, I use the changing cosmology of the Atayal people and current rituals in Wufeng as examples to show how indigenous people value their traditions and manage to reinstate certain cultural practices, albeit with modifications. Meanwhile, in urban areas, the indigenous settlers are also following ritual practices and ways of life that demonstrate their nostalgia.

## 5.1 Drinking and Atayal's *Gaga*

### 5.1.1 *Gaga* and the sacred wine

Atayal people believe they originated from *pinsbkan*, which means a cracking rock. The concept of a supreme supernatural being in Atayal cosmology is '*Utux*'. *Utux* is the general title for all supernatural beings, such as afterlife souls. However, today most Atayal people are Christians or Catholics and call God '*Utux*'. The moral rules intended to maintain their religious system and a harmonious society are called *Gaga*. In the Atayal language, *Utux/Kayal* (heaven), *Tayal* (persons) and *Hiyal* (the earth) share the same root 'yal', which means that life is connected to the entity of the world that consists of three elements (Diagram 5.1). From the Christian perspective, it is said among Atayal churches that conversion to Christianity is the miracle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century for Atayal people. Although Taiwanese indigenes traditionally practised animism, for Atayal Christians there is little conflict between Christianity and their traditional cosmology since they consider their relationship with *Utux* the most important. An Atayal pastor explained this to me:

'How do we listen to and understand the cry from the deep earth? How to know the cosmology up to the sky? It is possible only if we rely on a person's intuitive understanding by focusing on a core object, and that would be *utux (kayal)*.'

(Omi Wilang, an Atayal pastor, interviewed on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2018.)

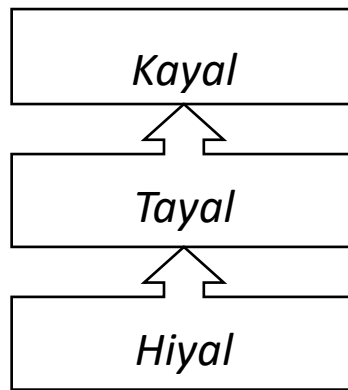


Diagram 5. 1 Atayal Cosmology.

Moral life is determined by *Gaga* in Atayal society. Behind *Gaga* is supernature, Utux, which now refers to God instead of ancestral spirits. The brief definition of *Gaga* is the primary principle of society. However, *Gaga* has its multi-meanings. In a more detailed definition, it can be interpreted as a specific social category in which people live, worship and hunt together. It can be also defined as a social norm that is regulated by the ancestors' words. *Gaga* protects collective benefits and ensures tight interconnections between individuals and the community. Submission to *Gaga* brings blessings to individuals while violation leads to illness or bad fortune (Zeng 2002; Sheu and Huang 2014). Pastor Omi Wilang, who is a member of the Presbyterian Church, told me:

‘*Gaga* is practised in order to achieve discipline to ensure the harmony [balance] between the eco-environment, the land, and human beings.....Atayal people believe that all goodness is from God. Once *Gaga* is violated, there are two possibilities; one is *Phaw* [punishment], the other is *Sbalay* [reconciliation].’

*Phaw* refers to the ritual process as a disciplinary action to ensure a deviant individual rejoins the group by correcting his or her mistakes, while *Sbalay* is more about the

settlement of interpersonal conflicts. After the ritual process, one can resume the status of *Sinhloyan*, which means that everyone is mutually related. Then, once the relation is built and society can be consolidated through the operations of such inner constraints, it creates the basic conditions for the formation of *Cinqlangan*, which means a group or an integrated community (Diagram 5.2).

Alcohol plays an essential role during ritual practices, including *Pslkawtas* (see Chapter 5.3.2), as well as *Phaw* and *Sbalay*. Both *Sbalay* and *Phaw* are the process of catharsis. Pastor Omi used an example to explain how *Phaw* is practised. He told me that if someone is suspected of committing adultery, the villagers would not question that man, but turn to an elder who is respected in the village. The elder would not punish the man directly, but he may ask that man to go hunting in the mountains with the one who has the dispute with him. While hunting, the two men might quarrel over the prey. Then, *Phaw* would be held afterwards when they come back, so that the two men can speak about what happened during the hunt, after drinking quite a bit of millet wine. Later on, they can speak about the reason for the conflict, and the two men may finally understand the reason for jealousy. Pastor Omi added:

*'At the end of the ritual [Phaw], the villagers would kill a pig and share with the whole village. Because this thing may be spread around the community, everyone has to understand the whole thing [...] It is called Qmes: by using a sharp knife to cut the pork, that symbolises cutting off the sin [...] otherwise, the whole clan or the village would be implicated by the curse [which is caused by offending Gaga].'*

*Sbalay* is similar to *Phaw* but tends to be held in order to solve the dispute between two groups of people. In a *Sbalay* ceremony, the two groups share their sides

of the story before the elders arbitrate between them to make a judgement. According to Huang (2001) who researched and witnessed the ritual in Cinsbu, millet wine is also used during the ceremony. *Sbalay* is a reconciliation ritual in which all participants drink from the same cup of wine. First, the two parties put their fingers in the cup and throw drops of wine up into the sky and on the ground, symbolising that they revere the spirit and do not forget their ancestors. The families of both parties witness the ceremony and support the agreement made by dipping their fingers in the wine and touching their lips. After the ceremony, neither party is allowed to raise objections. Any party who does not follow the agreement will incur bad luck.

Pastor Omi stressed how the two groups achieve the concordance during the ritual:

*‘If there is any dispute between the villages, such as fighting for the hunting field, the tribal leader would talk to the other buluo. If they have not reached a consensus, they would not be impatient. Both leaders would say these words at the same time, “Wali ugnan Utux Kayal?” which means “Isn’t there still a supreme God?”’*

Atayal people believe that there is an afterlife. When people die, the family will bury them in the centre of the houses. The spirit of the dead people can cross a rainbow bridge after death, under which there is a rapid stream with crocodiles and giant snakes. A judge waits at the end of the bridge to decide whether the spirits can cross the river if they have lived a moral life. A moral life is assured through the practices of *Gaga*. In this sense, alcohol use plays a critical part in ensuring the function of social constraints.

It takes time and effort to make millet wine, and that explains why millet wine is so valuable in economic terms. Millet wine is not always available, only if there is a good harvest. It requires much time and effort from sowing to fermentation, from reaping to brewing (See chapter 5.3.3). However, the more important part of its function is that millet wine is served as a mediator to maintain a group's social order and cohesive relationship under the supreme God's domination. This is why indigenous people presume drinking has its good value and is 'sacred'. Drinking is an embodied practice to ensure the harmony of the *Kayal-Tayal-Hiyal* relationship.

However, not all drinking practices have a specifically religious or moral purpose. For instance, there is a specific traditional way of chanting called *Lmuhuw*, which is sometimes practised along with drinking. The content of it records the epic migrations led by Atayal ancestors, who migrated northwards from their origin place to find cultivable lands. Normally, *Lmuhuw* is chanted and passed down by male elders while proposing marriage or reconciliation after a dispute (Kuan 2009; Chen, Suchet-Pearson, and Howitt 2018). Nowadays, people hold complex feelings about such kinds of practice. *Phaw*, *Sbalay* and *Lmuhuw*, which are taken as an Atayal people's lost traditional practices, may be seen as elegant ways for ancestors to tell their stories and build up sociality. However, some people, particularly from the churches, may devalue them because they involve the consumption of large amounts of alcohol. The contested values become obstacles for cultural revitalisation today.

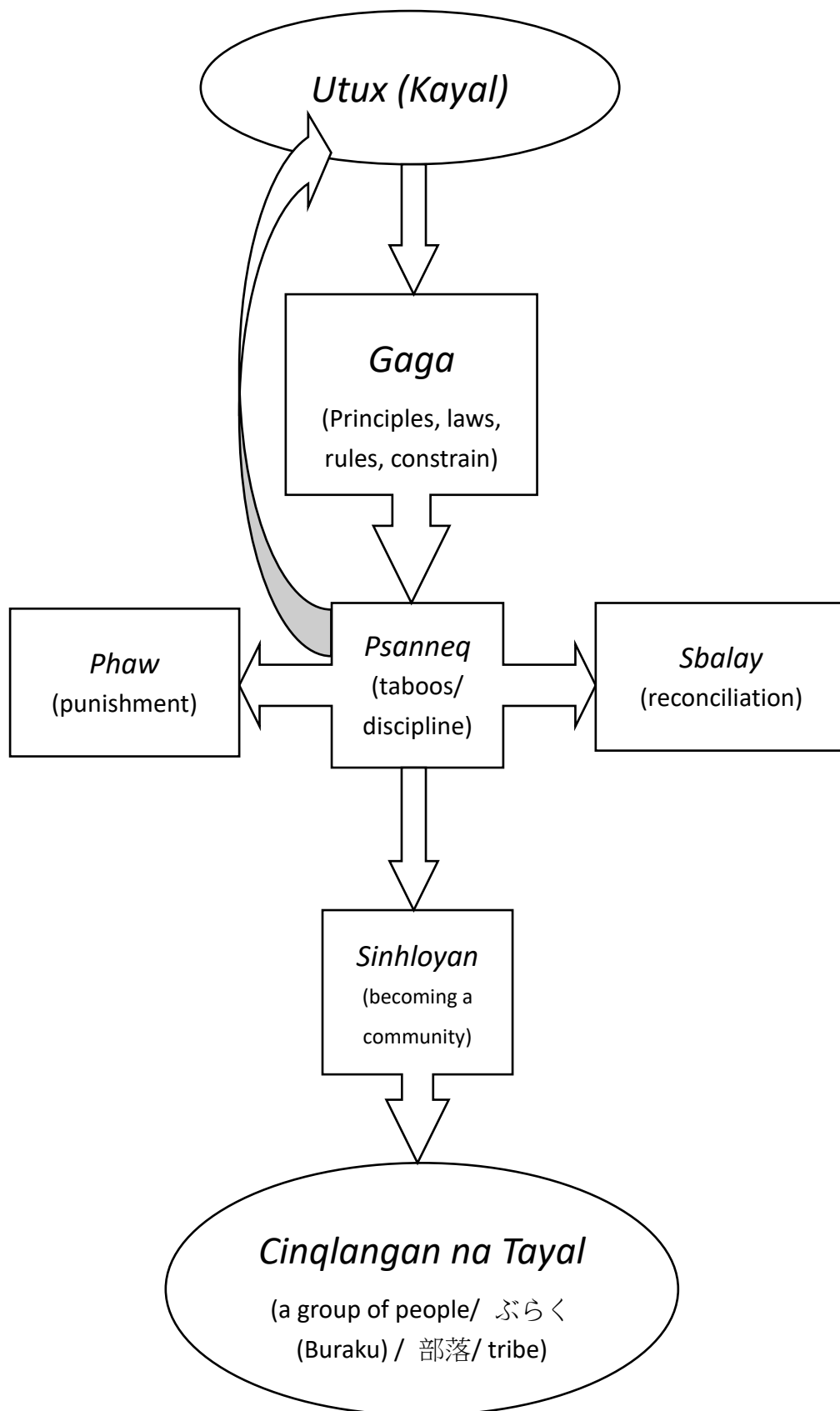


Diagram 5. 2 The practise of *Gaga*. (Diagram by Yi-Cheng Wu, based on an interview with Pastor Omi Wilang)

### 5.1.2 Christianity and cultural practices

Atayal people encountered Christianity at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. During the Japanese colonial period, Japanese missionary doctor Inosuke Inoue provided medical service in Klapay and Slaq (now Jienshe Township) and secretly preached gospels to Atayal people from 1911 to 1917 (Inoue 2016). Christianity entered Wufeng Township in the 1950s. In Wufeng, the three major Christian churches take different standpoints on alcohol use. The Catholic Church, which has a background of theological indigenisation, shows the most tolerance to traditional customs and also to individual behaviour. By contrast, the True Jesus Church, established as part of the Pentecostal movement in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, has the strictest perspective, opposing traditional ceremonies and drinking due to its abstentionist position. The Presbyterian Church stands between the two.

Scholars have long discussed the reasons for indigenous people's conversion to Christianity. An early missionary theologian pointed out that conversion to Christianity may have been due to the resistance against the coloniser (Vicedom 1967), while anthropologists argue that the religious movement can be seen as a kind of class conflict (Huang 1969), or a strategy employed by people to improve the conditions of their everyday lives (Huang 1996). After converting to Christianity, many traditional ceremonies have declined because of the conflict with monotheism. Some churches ban the ceremonies in order to eradicate 'bad habits' like drinking.<sup>41</sup> The attitudes of the current churches that people attend may also affect their attitudes towards the traditional rituals and the use of alcohol. One of my informants in Wufeng, an Atayal elder from the True Jesus Church, was invited as a guest to a TV

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<sup>41</sup> A typical debate on the banning of the traditional ritual ceremony took place in Fata'an, an Amis tribe in Hualien County. The church had banned the worship of their ancestral spirits and excessive drinking during the period of *Ilisin* since 1979. In 2018, the Fata'an Church reaffirmed the rule but incurred public criticism of religious colonialism.



show on Taiwan Indigenous Television, to introduce Atayal traditional chanting, and made relatively negative comments:

*'What the elders chant is something like dialogues. Atayal people are emulative. If they drink together, the emulative person will start to show off his experience and history. If someone repeatedly shows off where he has been and hunted a boar or something, the other one exaggerates that he has hunted a bear. Sometimes they fight if there is not enough wine. However, they would have more wine after they apologise. The purpose of chanting is to cheat people as a way of provocation.'*

It is reductionist to argue for any single reason for such differences, but an exploration of political background may illuminate the issue. In the recent growing movement towards transitional justice for indigenous people, there is more criticism of churches banning indigenous traditional ceremonies, condemning the church's religious imperialism as colonialist. In recent years, indigenous churches from the Presbyterian Church have vigorously promoted traditional cultural practices. For instance, some ceremonies of *Sbalay* held in recent years were organised by members of the Presbyterian Church, who have taken important roles in indigenous movements. The gesture of supporting cultural revitalisation to some extent shows their resistance to the governance of the state.

During the 1970s, some indigenous churches were oppressed by the KMT government who confiscated and burned Bibles and hymnals published in indigenous languages. The KMT government claimed that it was implementing the National Language Policy. However, the background was that many indigenous churches belonged to the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan, which had been active in the

promotion of democracy and human rights (Rubinstein 1991; Kuo 2008; Laliberté 2009), including drafting the ‘Public Statement on our National Fate’ after the Republic of China’s (Taiwan) withdrawal from the United Nations in 1971, and announcing the ‘Human Rights Declaration’ in 1977 (Liu 2013). Both documents reinforced the tension between the churches and the government during the period of martial law.

Meanwhile, some Presbyterian theologians have started to promote ‘contextual theology’, not only in response to cultural aspects of the gospel but issues of technology, politics, economy, human rights and social justice. A group of theological workers from Tainan Theological College and Seminary endeavoured to pass on the gospel through the reinterpretation of the Bible and history, listening to the voices of those who have suffered, identifying Jesus Christ’s Asian image, telling people’s stories (Huang 2005).

There is a commonly presumed ontological incompatibility between indigenous beliefs and Western Christianity, based on an argument that hinges on the conflict between animism and monotheism. However, the concept of the supreme God, ‘*Utux*’, may have rendered Atayal people better able to adapt to Christianity during the last half-century than other groups. However, there are still some dissenting opinions among Atayal elites who argue that Christianity has oppressed the traditional culture. My Christian informants told me that it is because Atayal people finally understand that *Utux* is the Unknown God, which is relevant to the biblical description in Act 17:23<sup>42</sup>.

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<sup>42</sup> The New International Version (NIV) of the Holy Bible reads: ‘For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: to an unknown god. So you are ignorant of the very thing you worship—and this is what I am going to proclaim to you.’ (Act 17:23)

Some indigenous scholars argue Atayal religious life can be interpreted based on the analogy of their weaving culture, that Atayal people are carrying out their faith of a ‘Woven God’ through the contextualised religious and cultural practices that intertwine the old and new (Buxing Dali 2007; Cao 2017). And this is not only seen in Atayal communities but can be a generalised practice for pan-indigenous groups in contemporary Taiwan. Therefore, ‘conversion’ may not be a proper term to describe indigenous people’s current various religious and cultural practices. The ‘hybridity’ of the Urapmin religious experience that Robbins (2004) uses to explain the multiple religious systems among indigenous people in Papua New Guinea is a thought-provoking one. Robbins indicates the transformative reproduction of the religious system that takes on a new culture, which may partially explain the integration of indigenous cosmology and Christianity, and actions taken to create a new form of religious life. However, Christianity does not change the drinking culture of indigenous people in a blanket way. As aforementioned, the three major Christian churches hold different attitudes toward alcohol use. Also, religious constraints are no longer powerful regarding controlling drinking practices; there are more significant forces such as political-economic power and the impact of modernity as triggers of change in cultural practices. The following chapters will expand on some of these.

## **5.2 Rituals in Wufeng**

Social scientists may have stressed that Taiwanese indigenous people’s drinking has moved from sacred to secular because of modernisation and capitalism (Hsia 2010; Chen 2014) but this dichotomous discourse may overlook the dialectal meanings in between. To examine the rationality of saying there has been secularisation of alcohol use, it is necessary to take a closer look at current cultural practices. In the rest of this

chapter, I use examples that indicate the sometimes vague boundary between the sacred and secular elements of cultural practices.

### 5.2.1 Carnivalisation of *PaSta'ay*

In Wufeng, Saisiyat people hold their most important ceremony, *PaSta'ay*, once every two years. The rite previously took place annually but this was changed by the Japanese colonial government to every two years on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the 10<sup>th</sup> lunar month, while the grand ceremony is held every decade. This was done to weaken the solidarity of the Saisiyat and diminish indigenous people's power.



Figure 5. 1 In the centre of the arena, Saisiyat people entertain the spirits of *ta'ay* by dancing and singing. *Pinotata'* (traditional millet wine) is provided for the dancers during the ceremony. (Photo taken in 2014)

*PaSta'ay*'s origin derives from the old folklore of *ta'ay* (also known as pygmy people or short black people). Centuries ago, there existed a mythical pygmy race known as the *ta'ay* who inhabited the neighbouring area. Both communities lived in harmony for years until the *ta'ay* started lusting after Saisiyat tribal women. Infuriated, the Saisiyat men slaughtered almost all of the pygmy people by chopping off the bridge

the *ta'ay* were using to cross over. Without access to crops, the *ta'ay* died out, but not before putting an everlasting curse on the Saisiyat. The terms of the curse were simple: if the Saisiyat did not remember them, then they too would face extinction because they would never have a good harvest. This is why *PaSta'ay* used to proceed solemnly to commemorate the *ta'ay*.

The first evening of *PaSta'ay* is called *kiStomal*. People dance and chant to commemorate the date with the spirits of the *ta'ay*. Married women of the village holding fire torches march into the field, followed by villagers wearing the *kilakil* and *tapangasan*, a clan symbol and traditional heap bell (*tabaa'sang*), swinging them back and forth to keep a rhythm going throughout the dance while other people carry the banners of the clans. '*Pinotata*' (traditional wine made from millet) is provided to the dancers during the ceremony (Figure 5. 1). On the fourth day, young people throw the branch of a tree to the east (the *papaoSa'* ritual), symbolising that they are approaching the end of the ceremony. Afterwards comes a ritual called *mari'karinraw*, the chief officiant (*Sapang 'azae'*) providing the 'spirit wine' to the assigned officiant to celebrate their successful cooperation. The ceremony lasts for five days until they hold *paSoSowaw* on the last day to bid the *ta'ay* farewell.

Along with the way the ceremony has become a tourist spectacle in recent years, the atmosphere of *PaSta'ay* appears to have changed a lot. The villagers who participate in the ceremony still dance and sing solemnly, but the crowd surrounding the arena has become increasingly chaotic and noisy. The drinking practices associated with the ceremony have also diversified in both purpose and meanings. My first time attending *PaSta'ay* was in 2014, the year the township was running an election. On the day of *PaSta'ay*, traffic was extremely busy since many local villages had electoral rallies during the daytime. It was said that *PaSta'ay* was deliberately

held before the election in order to gain more financial support. The election rallies are similar to those held in urban areas. People wear vests and caps printed with their candidates' names, making noise with firecrackers and steam whistles.

After the election rally the crowds began to melt away. Tourists flooded into the mountain in the evening. Shuttle buses and mobile toilets are prepared for tourists coming into Wufeng. Food stands surrounding the arena sell *pinotata* and recreational alcoholic drinks, such as beer or alcoholic herbal wines like 'Paolyta-B' (Figure 5. 2). Shouting and fights occasionally occur after binge drinking. During the ceremony, the Saisiyat villagers dance for and mourn the *ta'ay* in the centre of the ceremony arena and take turns drinking *pinotata* for days. Although *PaSta'ay* used to be carried out in a solemn mood, according to local people (and my observation), the atmosphere has become merrier in recent years. More and more tourists enter the area to take pictures. I still remember in 2014 when the ceremony stopped while the host announced the County Mayor's arrival. The Mayor even gave a talk to the audience, saying 'We should carry forward the culture of *PaSta'ay* to mainland China, and even the whole world!'

In 2016, when Saisiyat people held their decennial ceremony, I could only watch the news from a distant study room in Durham, UK. As previously mentioned, binge drinking related violence sometimes occurs during the ceremony. Watching the news, I realised that Saisiyat people have been worrying about the 'carnivalisation' of the ceremony since the County Council announced the expansion of the scale of the ceremony.<sup>43</sup> Unfortunately, violence still occurred in the grand ceremony in 2016 and, since then, the Saisiyat people have been considering closing their doors to tourists.

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<sup>43</sup> In 2016, the County Council planned to expand the scale of *PaSta'ay*. However, the plan caused Saisiyat people anxiety over violating the rules of the ceremony. (Retrieved from Taiwan Indigenous TV news <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kGY8jwKIR1A> on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2016)



Figure 5. 2 The ceremony arena was surrounded by local vendors. They sold not only traditional wines, *Pinotata*, but also Taiwan Beers and energy drinks like Paolyta-B, which contain alcohol. (Artistically modified photograph taken in 2014)

### 5.2.2 *Pslkawtas* day and night: The revolving stage of cultural practice

In the Atayal concept of *Utux*, there are various titles which refer to different supernatural beings. Atayal people call their deceased male ancestors *lkawtas* and female ancestors *lkaki*. *Pslkawtas* is the ritual to worship their *lkawtas* to acquire blessings from the ancestors, which ensures the harvest through the year. Nowadays, traditional rituals have been shaped by tourism. MacCannell (1999:91-107) adapts Goffman's (1959) social performance theory of front-back dichotomy to describe the modern tourist settings. In this subchapter, I extend the notion of 'staged authenticity' raised by MacCannell to that of the 'revolving stage' to expound my observation on present-time ceremonies, which show an even more vague subject-object relationship and reflect the parallel scenarios of indigenous people's cultural revitalisation. The modern ceremonies may be demonstrated to fulfil tourists' expectations of exotic rituals but are also shown to the insiders for the sake of political purposes.

When I returned to the field in Wufeng Township, I visited Hua-yuan Village, where I conducted the *Jiejiuban* (abstinence class) project two years previously. I met the farm owner, Mr Kuo who introduced me to Mr Lu, a Township Councilman, and Mr Wang, an Atayal senior, who had been selected to be the officiant of the Chu-lin Hua-yuan joint *Pslkawtas* that year. Mr Wang, Mr Lu and Mr Kuo are three typical figures in contemporary indigenous communities. For decades before he ran a grocery store, Mr Wang, as an Atayal senior in his seventies, lived a traditional Atayal life of farming and hunting. He is familiar with the details of the rituals, so he was nominated as the officiant of *Pslkawtas*. Mr Lu, 40-year-old county Councillor, used to work out of the township in an industrial area in Taoyuan City, but after saving enough money, moved back to his home village to run a campsite. He also plants mushrooms as one of his primary income resources. According to scholars in Taiwan, the patron-client system established by KMT and its control of social networks earned much support from indigenous people (Haisul Palalavi 2007; Pao 2017). Mr Lu, as a party member of KMT, has been keen on running local elections and providing public services and became a popular elected representative in Wufeng. Mr Kuo, a retired public servant and Hakka Chinese Han resident married to an Atayal woman, started to run a local tourist centre that accommodates visitors to experience Atayal life. Mr Kuo always invites Mr Wang to give talks to the tourists in his tourist centre. Mr Kuo even hired a photographer to make a record of the ceremony in order to demonstrate to the tourists in the future. Likewise, I was welcomed to take as many pictures as I could.

The Atayal's *Pslkawtas* was generally held during the end of August in each household. Since the period of Japanese rule, *Pslkawtas* has gradually declined. I was told by an informant a few years ago that the senior people may not be happy to hold



such a ceremony for certain reasons, mainly because of the changes in its meaning. In 1998, an activist proposed to hold the ceremony, but this gesture was suppressed by the local churches. However, I noticed that *Psilkawtas* were taken more seriously and valued more positively this year. Some households began to hold their own *Psilkawtas*. After the Presidential election that led to the third party alternation in 2016, Taiwan was coming into a new political era. The new government apologised to indigenous people for the first time. According to a BBC report,<sup>44</sup> Taiwan's President Ing-Wen Tsai said 'For the past 400 years, each regime that has come to Taiwan has brutally violated indigenous people's existing rights through military might and land looting.' She also said a 'simple verbal apology' was not enough.

The change in government also promoted discussions about transitional justice in Taiwan, including indigenous rights. Although there are still huge debates on the process of the revision of traditional territories, some innovations have been seen recently. An informant told me that he was very happy at this time, thanks to the government lifting the ban on hunting. Thus, Atayal people were permitted capture three flying squirrels in Shei-Pa National Park, the Atayal people's 'sacred mountain'.

In 2017, a government-funded official ceremony was held in the daytime on a holiday during August in Wufeng.<sup>45</sup> However, I was told 'You had better come to see the real ceremony in the early morning.' Traditionally, *Psilkawtas* were held privately in households. However, when I arrived, there were two other people, with heavy camera equipment, waiting at the ritual house. One of them was making a recording for a local leisure farm and the other one worked for a publisher. We were encouraged

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<sup>44</sup> See BBC News: Taiwan president gives a first apology to indigenous groups. Retrieved from <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-36940243>.

<sup>45</sup> This way there are more tourists to attend the ceremony.

to take pictures and asked to send a copy to the Community Development Association.

### **The nighttime ritual**

It was still dark at 3:00 a.m. I was invited to enter the ritual house, where they started a fire to roast a wild boar. Around 20 people gathered in the ritual house. They were chiefs of the two villages, township councillors, some other villagers holding official positions and local elders. A man poured ‘*qwau-Tayal*’ (‘*xiomijoiu*’ in Mandarin Chinese) into dozens of bamboo cups. People took turns to give a short talk and cheered with *qwau*. I was invited to drink a couple of cups. The officiant gave me a cup, saying ‘*rùj ìng suí sú*’ (入境隨俗), which means to follow the customs of where you go. To use an equivalent English saying, it would be ‘When in Rome, do as the Romans do.’ Later, they cut the meat into small pieces, wrapped it and *Tnapaq-rhkil* (sticky rice cake) in leaves and hung the packages on bamboo sticks. They poured *qwau* into thinner bamboo tubes to hang on the sticks (Figure 5. 3). Around 4 AM, before dawn, they brought the sticks out and headed for a hillside, loudly calling out their ancestors’ names. They stuck the bamboo sticks into the ground, shouted ‘*Usa la! Usa la!*’, which means ‘Go back!’ Go back!’, and then went back to the ritual house. An old man told me, ‘Don’t look back.’ This is to avoid their ancestors misunderstanding that their descendants want to snatch the food, which is regarded as disrespectful behaviour.

The Pslkawtas ended at around 5:00 a.m. Everyone went back to the ritual house and had some discussion about the plan for the following year, including the rundown of the daytime ceremony and the plan to expand the scale of the ceremony next year (Figure 5. 4). During the meeting, people seemed to admire the spectacular success of

Pasta'ay (the ritual of the short black people) held by Saisiyat people. After the meeting, a group shot was taken with everyone giving a thumbs-up.



Figure 5. 3 The elderly pour *qwau* into bamboo tubes to treat the '*lkawstas*'.

Before sunrise, people left the ritual house one by one, but there had to be at least one man remaining in the house as company for the ancestral spirits until 7:00 a.m. That man's duty was to take care of the fire that symbolises the clan's life. The man who stayed in the house told me his own story after learning of my research into indigenous drinking. He said that in the old times, Atayal people would gather during certain sacred occasions and, during the meeting, people should confess any wrongs they had done. At that moment, they needed to drink *qwau* and apologise to the ancestral spirit. Thus, 'When you see someone who is most drunk, he must be the one who did something the most wrong.' The man kept saying, 'I quit drinking last year for the reason of health. But not today. Today is an exception. This is for our important tradition.' (Figure 5. 5)



Figure 5. 4 A meeting in the ritual house. (Artistically modified photograph)



Figure 5. 5 The man who stays in the ritual house to take care of the fire.

### The daytime show

Along with the breakdown of traditional constraints and religion, the ancestors' preaching (*Gaga*) has lost its power and traditional rituals are declining in many *buluo*. To restore traditional rituals and assign an official holiday for Atayal people, some local Atayal communities and the government have tried to negotiate a new way to celebrate together by mixing the old rituals with tourism. The nighttime rituals, which are considered to be the 'real' ceremonies, are held using the financial support from

daytime ceremonies. In recent years, some indigenous townships have held *Gan-en-ji*. In Atayal language, this is called ‘*ryax smqas hnuway Utux Kayal*’.<sup>46</sup> Some villagers do not welcome the ceremony and think that it has lost its sacred meanings. An informant even told me ‘It is chaos!’ However, such a ceremony is a ‘staged’ practice to show to the authorities and receive subsidies.

When the daytime ceremony began, tourists and local villagers arrived at the ceremonial field one after another. Local police also showed up to direct the traffic and a 20 metre-wide rainshed was set up in front of the venue. Under the shed were seats reserved for officials and special guests, [‘*zhang-guan*’(長官), in Mandarin Chinese] (Figure 5. 6). These were the township mayor, elected representatives and the officers from the national park. Officials from the Cultural Tourism Bureaus in Township office also joined the audience. The full name of the daytime ceremony was ‘*Gan-en-ji*’(感恩祭) in Mandarin Chinese. The meaning of ‘*gan-en*’ is like ‘thanksgiving’ in Western culture. I tried to translate the full title of it as ‘Atayal Thanksgiving and Cultural Restoration Ceremony’, a newly invented ritual.

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<sup>46</sup> See Aboriginal Education World, No. 44, 2012, pp. 64-67 (in Chinese) [原教界 2012 年 4 月號 44 期 64-67 頁]





Figure 5. 6 Under the shed are seats reserved for officials and special guests.

The ceremony was held in a rectangular shaped venue beside the ritual house, with a reception where everyone could sign in and two auditoriums on both sides of the field. ‘Addresses by Honorable Guests’ started the formal event and the ‘*zhang-guan*’ were invited to give short speeches. Following this came the performances of welcoming dances, singing, hunting, seeding and ‘rituals’ of telling stories in mockery of the way this is done during *Pslkawtas*. They sent a hunting team into the hill and brought back



Figure 5. 7 The officiant displaying a flying squirrel which was hunted down in the mountain. (Artistically modified photograph)

the three flying squirrels which were previously captured in the National Park after three loud gunshots. Then, the flying squirrels were handed to the officials to display to the public (Figure 5. 7). The host of the ceremony tried to entertain the audience with jokes. The older official was not familiar with how to use the microphone, so his voice fluctuated squeakily. The scheduled ceremony was supposed to last a full day, but the events on the list were carried on even faster and finished by noon.

Surrounding the field, young volunteers with face paintings of traditional tattoos served the audience with '*qwau*'. They also gave the police officers a cup of *qwau*, saying 'It does not matter!', though everybody knows that drink driving is strictly forbidden by law in Taiwan. The audience was invited to dance with the dancers, who were not from Wufeng but its neighbouring township, Miaoli. Finally, the ceremony ended with a feast of ethnic food. Women were not allowed to take part in the *Pslkawtas*, but they had to wake up early to prepare the food for the daytime activities. Near midday, they had to send the dishes to the venue. I remember walking through a partially opened kitchen door and hearing a woman yelling at a young man who was in charge of carrying food to the venue: 'Hey, that is for "*zhang-guan*"!', which means the food should be served to the VIP guests first.

Although the performance metaphor may be criticised as overused, Kapferer (2005:50-51) calls for an approach to 'ritual dynamics' which are 'behind the scenes in theatrical performance rather than merely looking at what is overtly presented'. 'That is for "*zhang-guan*"!' Such careful prioritisation of the ritual setting reflected the tensions of order in contemporary indigenous societies. Borrowing Goffman's (1959) metaphor in theatrical terms, the arrangement of the nighttime ritual and daytime ceremony is just like the back and front stage of a performance. However, it is not easy to tell which is the front and which is the back. The staged performance is

demonstrated either to the insiders and the outsiders, and the stage becomes a revolving rather than a fixed one. In a way, the villagers demonstrate their cultural practice to tourists and the government. Atayal people also raised funding by organising the daytime ceremony, to ensure the ‘real’ ceremony could be operated well. On the other side, the nighttime ritual is a venue for inward demonstration that local public servants can stand firm on their political positions by taking part in the rituals, and this is also a way of ensuring the solidarity of the people. The ceremonies held during the daytime or at night are simultaneously the front and backstages while the ritual stands at the juncture of reviving the culture and securing the future.

In 2018, before finishing the fieldwork, I went back to Hua-yuan village for a farewell to the local elder, Mr Wang, who was the officiant of the *Pslkawtas* in 2017 and suffers from liver disease. The bout of illness has done serious damage to his health and caused him significant weight loss. I asked him whether there would be a *Pslkawtas* in 2018, but he did not give me a definite answer. What I knew is that the villagers were busy running elections for Township Mayor and representatives and there may not be adequate human and material resources for such an activity. The discontinuation of the ritual reveals the awkward situation that the arrangement of public activities of indigenous villages may still rely on the public administrative resources.

### **5.2.3 Impure *Xiaomijiu***

Millet wine, called *xiaomijiu* in Chinese Mandarin, plays an essential part in indigenous rituals as well as sociality in everyday life. The purity of the millet wine has been an issue that reflects how people imagine the authenticity of indigenous



culture from various perspectives. That purity is imagined from two aspects: the first is the ingredient composition and the second is the symbolic meaning of sociality.

As they approach the end of August, Wufeng people start to make millet wine for *Pslkawtas*, their rituals to worship deceased ancestors. However, there are fewer people who can make millet wine since brewery skills are declining. Millet wine is called '*kwo trakis*' in Atayal and '*pinotata*' in Saisiyat, and all the millet wines made by various ethnic groups are called '*xiaomijiu*' (小米酒) in Mandarin Chinese ('*xiomi*' means millet). In 2011, the news of 'fake *xiaomijiu*' struck Taiwan societies. It was reported that over 90% of *xiaomijiu* was not made by following the traditional skills and sticky rice was used instead of millet rice. However, some indigenous people did not acknowledge such accusations since the technology of making *xiomijiu* has changed over time.

The real difference may be in the ways in which it is used. According to interviews with several local elders, millet wine is very precious: 'We can only have a little of that during the rituals. It takes more than a month to brew the millet wine.' Current rituals may have even more millet wine consumption than previously following the expectations, similar to Mauss's (1925) 'potlatch', an indigenous gift-giving ceremony. The hosts of the rituals who may have certain roles in public sectors make the ceremonies grand occasions by inviting more people or even outsiders in order to enhance their reputation and political power. The other difference is that millet wine has become an exotic commodity of indigenous food, which can be purchased in indigenous townships all over the country. In order to make greater quantities, the methods of production will of course change and differ from place to place.

When I returned to Wufeng in 2018, the local people had become more careful about the ‘purity’ of the ceremony. Mr Chao, who has been a member of the ‘*Huchengzu*’ (Chinese Mandarin 護城組 for ‘the guardian team’), told me that ‘During so many years, I have never seen many conflicts during the ceremonies. Actually, those people who made trouble after drinking were all outsiders, not our villagers.’ I met Mr Chao in his local karaoke bar (where young Wufeng people drink all night during the weekend) when I was having dinner there. He led me to meet Ms Chu, who was working in the local Saisiyat Folk Museum.<sup>47</sup> They proudly introduced the ‘pure’ Saisiyat culture to me, including the making of the wine and the process of the ceremonies. Knowing I was researching alcohol, Ms Chu started the conversation by stressing that ‘We indigenous people did not use wine casually.’

There were a lot of rules when Saisiyat made traditional millet wines, ‘*pinotata*’. On the winemaking day, the wine maker had to make sure no-one got angry in the family because the *pinotata* had to be made merrily. No crying children or adult arguments were allowed near it, ‘Otherwise, the wine would be poor in its quality,’ Ms Chu added, ‘it would taste sour and smell pungent, without the sweetness that we expect.’ Following that principle, I reflected on what a nurse told me. As a Saisiyat woman who married an Atayal husband, she always had a headache when she had wine which was not made by her mother. The atmosphere is important. Pregnant women are not allowed to make the wine, nor are people who have just lost someone in their family. The taboo comes from anything bad that happens in the family.

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<sup>47</sup> The Saisiyat Folk Museum was built surrounding the *PaSta’ay* ceremony field. The construction began in 1996 when Saisiyat people had their Grand ceremony of *PaSta’ay*. It was opened in 2000, however the museum was criticised as amoral until it got its licence in 2014 after striving under joint assistance from the County Council, Council of Indigenous Peoples and Shei-Pa National Park. The museum was designed to be a multi-functional building that includes an exhibition area, a computer classroom and a multimedia room. Outside of the museum are empty booth areas that can be used as areas for food stands during the ceremony.

During *PaSta'ay*, every household would make wine and each family would provide at least two bottles of it to show their hospitality to the guest. Ms Chu stressed 'It is hard to make a jar of wine; we would serve *pinotata* to our best friends. Yes, that is how we show our utmost sincerity.' It can be seen that *pinotata* serves as an intermediary to communicate with the spirits, but also a symbol of sociality at the same time.

I pondered why my informants would always tell me about their 'tradition' by stressing the 'rare', 'pure' and 'handcrafted' millet wine, even though they would not deny that alcohol has become par for the course in everyday life. To invoke Mary Douglas's idea of contamination, what is regarded as dirt or contamination in a given society is any matter considered out of place. The symbolic meanings of the purity of the wine are the reflection of its opposite side: the contaminated world.

Since 2006, *PaSta'ay* and Shei-Pa National Park have built a partnership after signing a Partnership Agreement. This was set for both the indigenous community and the public sector to develop a relationship of reciprocity for the first time in Taiwan. Through this the Saisiyat group and the national park were able to acquire more resources, such as financial funding for *PaSta'ay*. The Saisiyat group welcomed the agreement by and large, which signified the minority group's increasing demand for external resources to fulfill the changes in its economic pattern.

During the year when I was doing fieldwork, an incident that happened in Taitung showed contemporary indigenous communities' sophisticated, complex attitudes towards millet wine. Although the monopoly policy was abolished in 2002, indigenous people's wine making is still regulated under The Tobacco and Alcohol Administration Act. An incident of policing *xiaomijiu* has triggered many discussions of the rules on *xiaomijiu*, regarding the conflict between respecting cultural practices

and the laws of the state. In the middle of July 2018, a large quantity of millet wine was detained by the police before *Masarut*,<sup>48</sup> a Paiwan *buluo* in Taitung, had its annual ceremony to celebrate the harvest. According to the law,<sup>49</sup> the intent to sell, transport or transfer illegal alcohol will be punished. The police's undercover way of handling the case, which meant the police officer interrogated the villagers without showing a search warrant, was criticised by local people. First, Ms Bao, the chief of the community, was asked the price of the wine. After answering, Ms Bao was reported for selling non-licensed privately brewed millet wine. The news then spread among indigenous townships nationwide and created an anxious mood in their communities, because selling unlicensed millet wine has been a common practice among them. However, people had to face stress from police afterwards.

Meanwhile, in Wufeng, tourists flood into Ulay Zhang Xue-Liang Cultural Park.<sup>50</sup> The gourmet area is located next to the Cultural Park.<sup>51</sup> Vendors sell bamboo tube rice and rice cake (traditional rice cake made of millet) and roast wild boar. They yell to tourists 'We also have *xiaomijiu* if you need them' but these bottles are not visible at the stalls. 'The timing is not right,' one of the villagers who ran the vendors' stalls told me. Whether it was because of the heat during the summer that meant the millet wine needed to be preserved in a cool area or due to the event in Taitung was

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<sup>48</sup> *Masarut* means 'New Year' in Paiwan language. Now it means the feast of the harvest and Paiwan people take it as the Harvest Festival to express their gratitude to god for the blessings.

<sup>49</sup> According to The Tobacco and Alcohol Administration Act Article 46, 'the sale, transport, or transfer, or the display or storage with the intent to sell, transport, or transfer illegal tobacco or alcohol will be punished with an administrative fine of not less than NT\$30,000 and not more than NT\$500,000.'

<sup>50</sup> Zhang Xue-Liang Cultural Park is the former residence of Zhang Xueliang, the former ruler of Northeast China. On December 1936, in the event called the Xi'an Incident, Zhang took Chiang as a hostage and demanded that he stop the civil war with the Communist Party and unite to fight against the Japanese. This resulted in Zhang being detained by Chiang Kai-shek by house arrest for over 50 years. Ulay is one of the places that Zhang was house arrested. Zhang Xue-Liang Cultural Park is located in the Qingquan tribe (Ulay) in Taoshan Village, Wufeng Township. After Zhang left Qingquan, the house was destroyed when the typhoon struck. The former residence is reconstructed and restored by the local government in order to improve tourism in Wufeng Township.

<sup>51</sup> The related incident of the vendors' area can be seen in Chapter 7.6.2, the eviction of the vendors in Ulay.

not clear. It is still unusual to see bottles of *xiaomijiu* on display at the vendors' stands. According to the rule, there is a storage limit of 100 litres, which may bring difficulties to indigenous communities given the needs of ceremonies. Ms Bao insisted that she did not make that much wine, but the local government explained that the problem was with the licence. Indigenous activists then condemned the government for invading indigenous culture and challenging their sovereignty.

What happened in Taitung may reflect the blurred boundary between traditional custom and the lawful use of alcohol under a modern state. However, another issue is the contradiction between genealogical organisation and current tribal society. Since the current bureaucratic system has replaced traditional organisations, there are increasing conflicts in tribal societies because of unequal power relationships between traditional leaders and current executive officers. Hence, it is not strange to hear villagers report others to the police in indigenous townships. Surveillance culture as the 'legacy' of the period of martial law has become the way of competing for limited resources in indigenous townships. One of the street vendors told me she was fined 30,000 NT dollars since she was reported for selling non-licensed, homebrewed *xiaomijiu*. She explained further:

*'But you know what? It is not easy to apply for a license. First, you need to own land to build a brewery, and the brewery should keep a distance from the water source. Moreover, you have to receive the government's inspection every year. The problem is, we do not own enough land.'*

The street vendor's complaint reveals the multiple causes of the impurities of *xiaomijiu*. To speak in terms of materiality, first, there are certain difficulties in maintaining the conditions necessary for quality winemaking, such as the traditional

preparation and production rules. Second, production of millet, previously a staple food, has decreased due to changes in people's dietary habits. Moreover, environmental changes have resulted in difficulties accessing water sources. In Wufeng, such a change of the natural environment may be due to repeated disasters and sandstone quarrying downstream which have led to the subsidence of the riverbed that depleted the river, according to the local residents.

The other angle is a social perspective, which refers to a more symbolic notion of impureness. In indigenous societies, the practices of food preparation and consumption are closely related to sociality. For Saisiyat people, pursuing purity symbolises guarding the morality of society, which encompasses both social relations and values. Such practices, as have been seen in indigenous communities elsewhere, are sometimes used to differentiate 'real' people from strangers and others (Fortis 2015:211). Impurity is a metaphor, reflecting the rituals that have become politicised, the complexity of their purposes and the variety of the participants.

Symbolically speaking, the impurity of *xiaomijiu* is a metaphor for the social changes that have occurred under colonialism. The reasons for change in the millet wine's quality are linked to the logic of changes in political, legal, social, moral and environmental domains. Another example of the change in the Atayal's *Psikawtas* is the change of social organisation. *Psikawtas* was previously organised by *gutux gaga* (the worship group) and hosted by *maraho* (the head of a clan). However, now the organisers of the ceremonies have been replaced by those who work in the public sectors. The hierarchy of kinship structure is challenged by the modern bureaucratic system. Moreover, the state's regulation of winemaking is also contradictory to the values of the tribal societies. The legitimacy of making millet wine is based initially on *Gaga* but now on laws. One may be able to pay for more equipment costs to ensure

the legitimacy of making *xiaomijiu*; because of the increase requirements for winemaking, those regulations may widen inequality among the indigenous communities.

### **5.3 *Ilisin* in Makotaay**

*Ilisin*, Amis harvest festivals, are mostly held in hundreds of Amis *buluo* from July to August. *Ilisin* in Makotaay is one of the most famous indigenous ceremonies in Taiwan, partly because the villagers have been trying hard to revitalise their cultural practice in the past ten years. The other reason is the exotic ritual of alcohol-use during the ceremony that attracts people's attention. Local people see such a ritual as a practice to transform the stereotype of drinking, but ways of using alcohol remain contested among the villagers.

#### **5.3.1 The *buluo* beside the coastal highway**

Makotaay is located in the mouth of the Xiuguluan River (Figure 5. 8). It was demarcated as a part of Gangkou village, Fengbin Township, Hualien County. Besides Makotaay, there are the Laenno, Tiraan, Molito and Cikowayan *buluo* in the same village, of which the combined population is about 800 people. In 1877, the villagers who live beside the mouth of the Xiuguluan River were massacred by the troops of the Qing dynasty Chinese Emperor. It was called *Karawrawan a demak no Cawi* (the *Cepo*' Incident) and resulted from the policy of 'The Cultivation of Mountains and Barbarians' (開山撫番) when Chinese troops attacked the indigenous people by violently opening a crossing through the village. Since the Chinese army could not conquer the village because of the Amis people's tenacious resistance, they killed the

indigenous warriors after hosting a feast with alcohol. The suffering from this land loss continued into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Until recently, the villagers were still fighting for land against the government since the government limited their cultivated area, which is also their traditional territory, as a recreational scenic park (Shihtiping, 石梯坪, see Figure 5. 9).

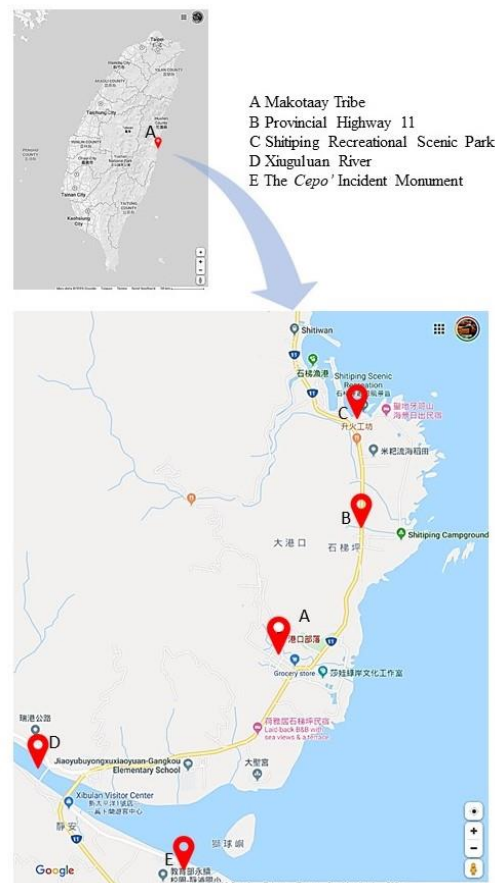


Figure 5. 8 The map of Makotaay and its surrounding area.

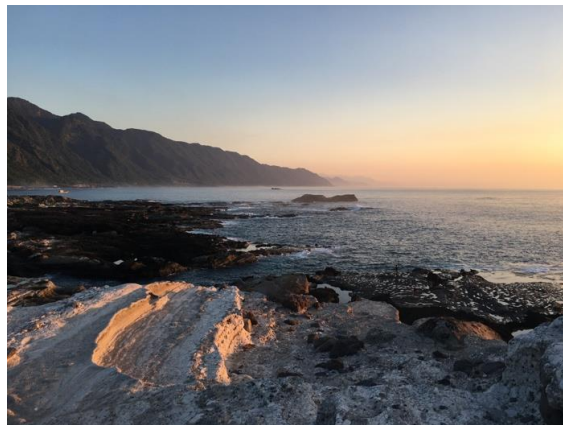


Figure 5. 9 Shihtiping (Stone Stair Terrace), an iconic scenic area near Makotaay.



During the past half-century, growing urbanisation and the limits imposed on the use of their land has meant indigenous people have had to leave their hometowns to seek employment, including young people in Makotaay. From the aspect of development, the east coast highways have been always considered as constructions that balance the east and west. However, the opening of Provincial Highway 11 has accelerated the outflow of the population for the indigenous villages in East Taiwan.

### 5.3.2 The rituals of *Ilisin*



Figure 5. 10 The entrance to the *Ilisin* arena. A billboard was set up to announce the rules of attending the ceremony, including regulations on photography.

The indigenous villages along Provincial Highway 11 are relatively quiet during the year, until summer comes. Amis, the largest indigenous group, has its specific age grade system of social organisation. Each year before the *Ilisin*, the people at the level of *Mama Nu Kapah* (the father of the youth, the top age group of the youth level) invite *Kakitaan* (the tribal leader), consultants and youngsters to discuss the details of preparations for the ceremony. Preparations include *milunu* (collecting money and rice), making cups, preparing alcohol, printing invitation cards and slaughtering pigs for the sacrifice. The ceremony is held at a square in Makotaay primary school.

Unlike the annual united *Ilisin* held by the government in Hualien City in mid-summer, *Ilisin* in Makotaay was not propagated to please tourists, though there were small stands selling food, drinks and toys set up surrounding the square. There is no specific area reserved for the audience, though family members and their friends set up plastic stools around the arena. The ceremony lasts five days, the first day attracting the most tourists because the ritual of *pacakat* (the age level upgrading) is well-known due to previous media coverage. However, in the year I visited, the *buluo* set up a strict regulation that photography and videotaping were prohibited without their official permission (Figure 5. 10).

Before midnight, the Village Office announces the start of the event through its PA system. They broadcast the songs of a local singer, Anu, to summon the villagers. The ceremony starts with the ritual of *Mitekas*, which means worshipping ancestral spirits. During the ceremony, the villagers hold hands to make several big circles and people of the same age gather to dance and sing together. Each leader of the group leads the singing and dancing, and the others copy. The dance steps change under tacit mutual understanding; the dancing circles move with a tempo like the rhythm of ocean waves, sometimes peaceful, sometimes intense. Their songs are just like a dialogue in between.

During the dance, *Malakacaway*,<sup>52</sup> the people who belong to one of the levels under *Mama Nu Kapah*, serve as rice wine dispensers. They stand in front of the dancers in circles, scoop rice wine from the metal buckets with bamboo cups, then give the cups to the dancers. They cheer each other, sometimes making jokes. After the dancers finish their cups, those *Malakacaway* then find the next one and repeat the same practice.

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<sup>52</sup> *Malakacaway* is the 6<sup>th</sup> level in Amis levels of youth. There are three major age groups in Amis society, which are *Kapah* (the youth), *Matuasay* (the elderly) and *Kalas no Niyaro* (the wise men). In *Kapah*, there are eight levels, which are *Miafatay*, *Midatongay*, *Palalanay*, *Miawaway*, *Cirummialy*, *Malakacaway*, *Cifillaccay* and *Mama nu Kapah*. The age gap of each level is four years.

The dancing circles keep on moving in laps through the night. Women pass water and betel nuts from out of the circles to maintain the dancers' physical and spiritual status, though nowadays betel nuts may be substituted for sweets. One of my informants, Miss Chen, who has been working as a local culture-history researcher, explained the ceremony to me:

*'The dancers have to respond to each other at any time, with the songs, and, by the feeling of holding each other's hands. Their spiritual status is totally opened. They can be very excited sometimes; they even have to provoke the moods of others. Otherwise, the ceremony can be dreary. Their sensory system is totally opened. The feelings can be released. Through this, it can arouse an echo. It is the whole psychic system that is continuously operating.'*

The psychic system that Miss Chen used here to describe the ritual implies a collective sensing process through each individual's tacit awareness. Alcohol has been used as an essential medium to provoke that ability.

When dawn breaks, boxes of rice wine are moved to the centre of the arena, to signify that the upgrading ritual is coming to an end. Those who are upgrading to *mama no kapah* stand on a bench and drink the rice wine that their peers pour into big wooden bowls. Then they raise their arms and shout out loud, celebrating like returning warriors. After coming down from the bench, they high-five others lining up for the challenge, like a baseball player heading back to the dugout after a home run.

### **5.3.3 'Dear rice wine, you are defeated!'**

Amis Documentary filmmaker Mayaw Bihow released two films about the *Ilisin* on Makotaay. The first one was 'Dear Rice Wine, You are Defeated'(1998) which

shows the dialectical questioning of the iconic role of the upgrading ritual, *pacakat*, where people of the youth level, *Cifilacay*, can only be upgraded to the level of *mama nu kapah* after drinking a bowl of rice wine and singing and dancing all night long. People who become *mama nu kapah* then have the responsibility to lead the youth group to protect the community. The other film is ‘*Malakacaway*’ (2007) which refers to the youth level below *Cifilacay*, which introduces the details of each age level and shows the process of preparing for *Ilisin*.



Figure 5. 11 The *Paawak* ritual. The tribal leader encourages a young man to drink the rice wine.

In ‘Dear Rice Wine’, the villagers discuss their feelings before *pacakat*:

*A: ‘When I saw that bowl of rice wine for the first time, I wished I could have that, too. They seemed to feel very comfortable and sweet after drinking it off. Just curious. It seemed delicious.’*

*B: ‘We don’t really drink that much usually. It might be harmful without any benefit while having that much alcohol. So, we think that maybe we can cancel that traditional ritual, paawak [the ritual of drinking].’*

*C: 'Nowadays our young people would not act properly after drinking. It may affect the impression of our people. So, I just proposed if we could change it or not.'*

*B: 'Maybe we can substitute that for laying a wreath or something else instead.' 'If we become the mayor of the township, we would cancel it, because it is only harmful to our health. We people at this age may wish to improve such a bad drinking traditional culture.'*

However *Kakitaan*, the tribal leader, does not agree with that.

*'It is not like that. They drink all night without being drunk in the karaoke [...]*

*Laying a wreath? Are you playing a game? Are you electing the president?'*

After the ceremony, when being asked about the opinions toward the upgrading ritual, they reply:

*C: 'After this bowl of rice wine, I have been relieved. I am not nervous anymore.'*

When asked whether to cancel the ritual, some of them say 'No, absolutely not!'

*C: 'For me, I wish it can be changed. However, we should follow the tradition.'*

*B: 'After drinking that, I feel really good. I think it is impossible to change, we have to continue our good traditional culture.'*

Unlike 'Dear Rice Wine' which shows the simple attitude change toward the use of rice wine, '*Malakacaway*' introduces each of the age levels and represents the more delicate self-dialogue surrounding the value of alcohol use during *Ilisin*. In this film, the sculptor Rahic Talif<sup>53</sup> talks about his heartfelt wishes to be a member of Makotaay (Figure 5. 12). It films the process of preparation before the major ceremony, while young people share their experiences and thoughts of the tribal event. *Milunu*, which

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<sup>53</sup> Rahic Talif was born into the Amis Makota'ay tribe of Hualien in 1962. He is a professional artist who works in the fields of wood sculpture, installation art, performance art, architecture, furniture, reworking tribal culture, indigenous society and culture etc. (<https://rahictalif.com/about/artist/>)

means young people collect the money and rice before *Ilisin*, is the main point of the film. The villagers' discussion in a circle and 'speaking out' everything, including apologies for past mistakes, with the use of alcohol reveals how the villagers reinforce the solidarity of the people.

Rahic also shares his experience of *milunu*:

*'We used to collect rice during milunu. We farmed before. One of the women had saluted me with her self-brewed wine, saying "This is for the better buluo."'*

Another celebrity of the *buluo*, Song Shao-Ching, an actor, said:

*'During those years, I always feel nausea while smelling the rice wine. Thus, my mother even chooses not to use rice wine in cooking. It is a big harm to us indigenous people, that I fell down in forty minutes, and did not wake up in the following few days. Of course, as time goes by, it has been getting better. Growing up may make you feel kind of, sweetness.'*

These interviews show the villagers' complex attitudes towards alcohol use. They differ from and complicate the way that the first film shows dramatically changed attitudes toward rice wine. Instead it emphasises those ambivalent feelings and thoughts in between like and dislike, right and wrong, bad and good.



Figure 5. 12 Rahic Talif (right), an Amis artist, dancing as a youth member of the youth group in

*Ilisin*. (Screenshot from the Mayaw Biho's documentary film, '*Malakacaway*', 2007)

#### **5.3.4 Rituals that change with the times**

Currently, the length of *Ilisin* has been shortened from several weeks to six days under the regulation of the government and for religious reasons. Also, during the last day of the ceremony, tourists are allowed to dance and drink together with the villagers, which is like the current arrangement of Saisyat people's *Pasta'ay*. The ritual at the beginning of the ceremony, *Mitekas*, had been cancelled for several years due to the villagers' conversion to Christianity. However, along with the rise of cultural revitalisation, some practices have been brought back again. According to my observation in Makotaay, some of the rituals seemed to be new compared to the ceremony that I watched on TV. My informants told me that they were brought back through the process of cultural revitalisation. Local people have been trying to confirm how the ceremony should be performed with the seniors in recent years.

In the beginning, some of the the Makotaay villagers considered rice wine harmful to their health, and possibly as defective in its cultural meaning. However, after they drink the rice wine at the end of the ceremony, they feel no need to change in this way. Taiwanese scholars have argued that the documentary film reveals a change in the meaning of alcohol, which turns the stigma of drinking into motivation for ethnic reconstruction, reinforcing a sense of belonging and social, political and cultural resistance to the stigma deriving from the process of modernisation (Lin 2001; Hsia 2010). However, the debate continues.

*Ilisin* in Makotaay has been registered as one of the 100 Religious Attractions in Taiwan, which was proposed by the Ministry of the Interior in order to promote local tourism. Since 2011, it has been also listed as one of the Intangible Cultural Heritages,

enacted by the Ministry of Culture and carried out under the Cultural Heritage Preservation Act. Such a gesture of becoming an officially identified cultural practice was not just for the sake of culture, as Miss Chen told me:

*'First, since the state has been eager to occupy the land, we need the power of culture to fight against the government. In a way, maybe culture has its power; in another way, the government made a promise to protect the local area. Second, since our people leave their parents, they would raise their children outside. How can we bring them home? Would they turn their heads to see their parents' culture?'*

Although the government stresses 'tradition' and 'local characters' as official reasons to preserve the ritual, the practice of cultural revitalisation here has its social and political purpose. Those meticulous rituals do not exist as they did previously; their style and the details are ever-changing. Take the example of white strips of cloth on the dancers' feather headwear which was added under the 'Kominka Movement'.<sup>54</sup> During the period of Japanese rule, a villager who worked in the Makotaay Shinto shrine suggested his people do this. In the past, they used traditional brewed millet wine (Amis: *epah*) as *lingalawan* (offering a libation of wine). However, nowadays, *epah* has been substituted for rice wine. Chen added:

*'It is easier to buy outside. Furthermore, in the past, all people had to collect the self-brewed millet wine together from door to door [...] I have written two plans*

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<sup>54</sup> The Kominka Movement: 皇民化運動 日語：皇民化教育／こうみんかきょういく. During World War II, the Japanese government promoted the policy of Japanisation in order to assimilate colonised peoples to pledge loyalty to the Empire of Japan. Japanisation is the process in which Japanese culture dominates, assimilates or influences other cultures in general.



*for that year, one was **mirarakat**,<sup>55</sup> The other one was self-brewed wine. We can make the wine under cover of the seniors. However, it takes time to be well discussed. Thus, it faced huge resistance.'*

Some faces featured in the documentary film can be spotted in the arena today. The villagers come back to their hometown to celebrate the harvest, a practice to bind people together. Some bare-chested bodies expose tattoos and amputated limbs demonstrating their experience of vagrant lives. Along with the growing cultural or ethnic identity, more youth come back to resettle in their hometown. In the recent decade, many young artists have returned to the home village and set up workshops in Makotaay, including Rahic. Those young artists have started to become aware of a need to return home. Some art installations have been established along the coastal area of the village, some of them having been set up after a major art event in 2015. These artistic creations all show the inspiration from the themes of indigenous life experience connected to the land.

The narratives of the Mayaw Biho's documentary films may lead viewers to understand the use of rice wine from a positive angle, but it seems to be too reductive to conclude that the villagers in Makotaay have taken current ritual practices for granted. To 'defeat' the rice wine could also be a metaphor that represents male villagers' masculinity. Although the gender difference was not elaborated in the films, Mayaw Biho had already implemented a hint of that by quoting the confession of an old woman at the beginning of 'Dear Rice Wine':

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<sup>55</sup> *Micohong* (to comfort the family of deceased) and *mirarakat* (to walk and to ease up) are Amis traditional rituals which are held 40 days after a funeral. The uncles (*faki*) and the aunts (*fai*) of the family of the deceased lead their family members to visit the families that have a close relation to the deceased. When they arrive at the family of the deceased, they will sing traditional songs to comfort each other. They also have lunch together, during which they drink together in order to speak their sorrows.

*‘Why do Pangcah like to make the wine? Because there was no Monopoly Bureau at that time. What did we drink? We Pangcah made that by ourselves. We use sticky rice, millet, brown rice. There was no place to buy drinks, so we made our own. At that time, the Japanese government did not prohibit self-brewed wine. I don’t like the rice wine that we use today. I feel as if something bad has been put in it, like drugs. I am afraid of the taste of rice wine. We Pangcah made the wine on our own, we can see those people who made the yeast and all the other ingredients. There was nothing harmful in it. Pangcah wine tastes very smooth, so I like the self-brewed wine.’*

### **5.3.5 *O’lalan ko epah***

An Amis saying goes ‘*O’lalan ko epah*’, which means ‘wine is our road.’ The *Pangcah sikawasay* (Amis traditional priest) sings these words since they believe there is a *calay*, a kind of invisible rope, that leads Amis people to walk on their ancestors’ road. During the past century, *lalan*, which means the road, has been replaced by real roads, like coastal highways constructed for the state’s capital, which have pushed out the people and resulted in continual relocation for almost a century. The symbolic road, namely alcohol, then becomes a facet of indigenous people’s nostalgia.

*Ilisin* in Makotaay reflects a group of Amis people’s comprehension of their culture through societal change, but also reveals the indigenous struggle under a collective destiny. The exotic ritual practice may distract the audience who then pay more attention to that bowl of rice wine than the whole process of its preparation. The point may not only be the matter of whether or not they drink the wine. Perhaps we can still flip the stereotype image of indigenous people by saying they have ‘defeated

the alcohol'; however, the non-stop struggles and the debates over detailed arrangements of the rituals call for deeper reflections.

If one looks closely at the wave-like dancing circles, there are tattoos and amputated limbs among the dancers. They are the stigma of their diasporas. From midnight to dawn, the continuously moving circles represent the creation of an order, a norm that contains – borrowing psychoanalyst Wilfred Bion's (1962; 1970) theory of Container-Contained – not only an amount of alcohol but also those lives which have been seen as chaotic and deviant. Such a tolerance reveals how Turner (1977) cites Csikskentmihaly (1975) to talk about building *communitas* in the liminal phase that there is a loss of ego, and the self becomes irrelevant in the state of flow.

## 5.4 Conclusion

'It is not usually necessary to make such distinction between the two. However, we find that we cannot understand this field of pollution unless we enter the sphere which lies between that behaviour which an individual approves for himself and what he approves for others; between what he approves as a matter of principle and what he vehemently desires for himself here and now in contradiction of the principle; between what he approves in the long term and what he approves in the short term. In all this there is scope for discrepancy.'

Douglas, *Purity and Danger* (1966:131)

This quote from Mary Douglas's work on purity perfectly reflects the grey zone of the meaning of indigenous people's drinking today. The aforementioned vignettes

reveal that there is a sphere 'in between'. For example, the traditional millet wine which is shared with a tourist audience during the ceremonies, particularly those carnivalised ones, may have become the mediator between the imagined authentic tribal culture and the public sectors of the modern state. The modern alcoholic beverages that, misused, can be a threat to health, have been adapted from sacred rituals. The most salient impact on the purity of wine is turning the ritual into a tourist spectacle. This has brought about more challenges for the indigenous group to manage both the 'external boundaries' (Douglas 1966:115-140) to secure its own right of cultural practice, and the 'internal lines' (ibid.) that are drawn up for recognising their moral situations in an ever-changing world.

The borderline between the sacred and the secular is not determined by the category of the drinks; nevertheless, it emerges through the practice of sociality. I recall a time when I went to Wufeng for *jiejiu* project many years ago. I tried to buy a piece of Atayal weaving artwork from a local activist's workshop but was refused. I was told that they did not sell those works. The year I returned to Wufeng, more workshops had opened to sell the crafts to tourists. However, I had acquired several pieces from local people without paying any money. This experience reminds me of how sociality as practised through gift exchange means that the value of the materials can only be determined through how they are utilised. In other words, alcohol itself does not have a value until it emerges through social practices. Whether using millet wine, Paolyta or beer, there is not a category to differentiate the sacred drinks or secular ones until they are used build up some sort of relationship. This explains why I felt accepted when I was treated to a cup of Paolyta for the first time.

To elucidate the sacred and secular relationship, Graburn (1989) uses 'sacred journey' to describe the tourists' departure from profane work time is similar to what

Leach's (1961:132-136) interpretation on the succession of the festival in a year's progress that represents a 'shift from the Normal-Profane order of existence into the Abnormal-Sacred order'. Indigenous people even demonstrate their ceremonies and everyday life practices to fulfil the tourists' various purposes. Smith (1989: 4-5) identifies the 'ethnic tourism' which is marked 'quaint' indigenous customs and 'cultural tourism' that highlight the vanishing 'old style' of local people.

This may partially explain how indigenous people's rituals which are not so sacred today are still exoticised, as are indigenous people's everyday practices, including drinking. However, the more the boundary between sacred and secular is reinforced, the less we can comprehend the meaning of the 'betweenness' regarding the values of drinking practices. The 'betweenness' of the rituals may be best explained by aforementioned 'liminality' that Turner (1977) indicates:

'A limen is a threshold, but at least in the case of protracted initiation rites or major seasonal festivals, it is a very long threshold, a corridor almost, or a tunnel which may, indeed, become a pilgrim's road or passing from dynamics to statics, may cease to be a mere transition and become a set way of life, a state, that of the anchorite, or monk. Let us refer to the state and process of mid-transition as "liminality" and consider a few of its very odd properties. Those undergoing it – call them "liminaries" – are betwixt-and-between established states of politico-jural structure. They evade ordinary cognitive classification, too, for they are neither-this-nor-that, here-nor-there, one-thing-not-the-other.' (Turner 1977:37)

Although contemporary indigenous communities still preserve traditional rituals, the arrangement and the process of the ceremonies has largely changed. The purposes of the rituals are realigned. The rituals may not be held for secular reasons but still have their symbolic meanings, of which the most popular type is called cultural revitalisation. These ceremonies can call for the solidarity of the communities, as well as enhance economic benefit from tourism. Dancing and drinking together with the tourists during the rituals reveal the emerging of a new *communitas* that embraces more groups of people, including the outsiders.

Finally, on the subject of tourism, Maurer and Zeiger (1988) argue for an ethnic group's ability to accommodate tourism effectively, including its capacity for renewal that allows them to assimilate influences from outside and the ability to differentiate the sacred and the profane. This statement implies a positive perspective on the apparent decline of the sacred. However, according to my ethnographic observation, it is too naive to optimistically imagine that indigenous people in Taiwan have developed such an ability given their ongoing predicament. Alcohol use is always accompanied by conflicts and threats to lives. This is reflected when drinking practices become part of the symbolic violence, described in the next chapter.

## 6. Drinking and Dispossession

### 6.1 Drinking Under Structural Violence

*'Anthropology has usually "studied down" steep gradients of power.'*

Paul Farmer (2005:48)

It is generally considered that, as previously discussed, drinking has contested meanings (Gusfield 1996). In the previous chapter we saw how drinking has both sacred and secular dimensions for indigenous people in Taiwan. In this chapter we shall consider other prominent disparities in the characteristics of alcohol use among Taiwanese indigenous people, who show more obvious conviviality in everyday life but also have been seen to have more problematic drinking issues, since alcohol use reflects the reality of human suffering. In this chapter, I try to point out that indigenous people's drinking practices are closely related to the landscape changes through the process of development. In another sense, drinking still reflects suffering under structural violence (Farmer 2002; 2005; 2009). One of the examples that defines alcohol as symbolic violence is Pine's (2008) research on Honduran labourers' enforced acceptance of the violence of modernity and capitalism. Farmer (2005) reminds us that anthropological researchers should not fall into the trap of cultural relativism and ignore social inequality. Taiwanese indigenous people's drinking practices are even more complicated since their drinking cultures have been changed and valued in various ways according to different moral standards. It is difficult both to avoid victimising indigenous people and overstressing the positive meanings of drinking.

When I conclude that the changes in cultural practices and the use of alcohol do not diminish the sacred meanings of drinking, I am not trying to conceal the hazardous effects of drinking or idealise alcohol use, nor to decriminalise capitalism or colonialism. How did drinking practices become the way they are today? Farmer's (2009:17) plea that we 'identify the forces conspiring to promote suffering' is the main focus of this chapter. Whether these people live in the mountains, urban areas or on offshore islands, their drinking practices reflect the violation of their land rights and the fundamental prerequisites for well-being of which they have been deprived under party-state capitalism in settler-colonial Taiwan.

### **6.1.1 The 'party-state capitalism' regime**

Taking a political-economic perspective on the anthropology of drinking, Singer (1986:114-115) suggests we explore the 'encompassing socio-economic forces' that shape contemporary drinking patterns as well as comprehending alcoholism in terms of the specific dynamics of the 'capitalist world-system'. What Taiwanese indigenous people have experienced is a specific colonial situation from Dutch rule during the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Japanese rule during the 20<sup>th</sup> century and then the rule of the KMT and the Republic of China, established as a result of Chinese Han immigration after WWII. Among these colonial regimes, the KMT one-party dominant system – as the settler-colonial regime – has had a profound impact on indigenous people's lives.

During the era of single party rule, the KMT government enacted the law of 'The Rule of Mountain Area Access Control During Martial Law Era in Taiwan Province' (台灣省戒嚴期間山地管制辦法法), in order to prevent anti-government groups hiding in mountainous areas. In 1965, the government pushed these rules further



forward, becoming stricter by establishing more security checkpoints in the control zones to limit people's access to the mountains. Meanwhile, the government's monopoly of the forestry business resulted in indigenous people's outflow from their home villages.

The KMT government was supported by the US since Taiwan was seen to have an important geopolitic role during the cold war era. A treaty called the 'Mutual Defense Treaty between the United States of America and the Republic of China'<sup>56</sup> was signed in 1954 to secure Taiwan from invasion by the People's Republic of China and to support the island's infrastructural development. The total amount of the financial loan from the US government was approximately \$5 billion USD. The 'Taiwan Economic Miracle' refers to the rapid industrialisation that took place after World War II largely as a result of this US military aid. It has benefitted the majority of Taiwanese people, including some of the indigenous elites who migrated to urban areas to make money, but it has also accelerated the marginalisation of indigenous groups. Although single party rule ended at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the legacy of party-state capitalism still influences indigenous people's everyday lives today.

'Party-state capitalism' refers to a specific political economic reality that indigenous groups have been facing where resources are controlled by the colonial power, previously the Japanese and then the KMT. Although Taiwan has gone through the process of democratisation, indigenous people have shown their ambivalent attitude towards the KMT, the political party that ran the former autocratic government. In brief, while the majority of indigenous people supported the KMT,

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<sup>56</sup> The 'Mutual Defense Treaty between the United States of America and the Republic of China' was generally known as 'The Sino-American Mutual Defense Treaty'. During the Cold War, the worldwide confrontation between capitalism and communism was the background of the treaty, which was signed in Washington D.C. in 1954 as a defence pact between the United States and the Republic of China (Taiwan). The treaty was effective from 1955–1979.

uneven resource allocation then rendered greater conflicts within the tribal societies. The following chapter is a typical example of the conflict in an indigenous community that reflects the pain of societal change. I describe the stories of certain people in Wufeng to show the picture of current life in contemporary tribal societies.

### 6.1.2 The Eviction of Vendors in Ulay



Figure 6. 1 A banner which reads 'The Township Mayor Split Our People'.

In Chapter Five (5.2.1 *Gaga* and the sacred wine) I mentioned *Gaga* as the Atayal's central regulation for ensuring people live in the right way. From rituals to daily routines, *Gaga* is a pack of statutes and precedents that are not written in a guidebook but passed on through everyday practice. According to *Gaga*, in order to maintain community solidarity, Atayal people seek reconciliation through the ritual of *sbalay* (reconciliation) and enforce *phaw* (punishment) to uphold justice. Traditional millet wine is an essential method of catharsis, and during the ritual process people express their true feelings. Along with the decline of *Gaga*, Atayal people are gradually losing this method of catharsis through their rituals, as well as their ways of rebuilding relations post-conflict. The traditional social organisation is replaced by

modern bureaucracy, which has even more authority to make big decisions, but acquires less trustworthiness. The incident of the eviction of Ulay vendors represents this problematic situation.

The Ulay *Buluo* has become a famous tourist attraction in Wufeng, with visitors flocking there every weekend. A Japanese policeman found a hot spring there in 1913 and it was turned into a therapeutic centre, called Inoue Onsen Sanatorium (井上溫泉療養所). Later, during the Chiang Kai-Shek led KMT era, the house was used for the house arrest of General Zhang Xueliang, a former Chinese warlord who came over with the KMT but was imprisoned by Chiang during the Chinese Civil War. Although both the spring and the buildings were ruined after repeated typhoons and floods, the current government rebuilt them to facilitate tourism.

The Ulay vendors' area was one of the places I visited most frequently during the *jiejiu* project in 2012. The vendors advertised their dishes as native cuisine, including roasted wild boar, *makau*-flavoured sausage, rice in bamboo tubes and traditional brewed millet wine. Those food stands were not set up legally, but they had existed for more than ten years. Most vendors are *Syakaro* people who settled down around Ulay. In 2010, an anonymous complaint was made that the Wufeng Township administration was irresponsible in allowing these vendors to run their businesses in a public parking area. The Hsinchu County Council asked Wufeng Township administration to apply to the Department of Commerce, MOEA, for the establishment of a 'Brand Commercial District'. However, the plan was postponed due to the vendors' resistance.

Because of the limited space, there was only room for about 20 stands. The gourmet area also lacked integrated management, and the food and cooking hygiene standards had come into question. Wufeng Township officials claimed the vendors

were committing an offence in defiance of Article 82 of the Road Traffic Management and Penalty Act. However, the Township administration rebuilt the area and announced that spaces should be reallocated to the villagers by drawing lots.

Laling was the local grassroots activist who led the fight. By early March 2017, the vendors were subdued and solemn. Normally, I saw them loudly announce food and wares for sale in a relaxed atmosphere. One day when I visited, some of the vendors were shouting and using strong language, and they were tipsy. Meanwhile, the Township officials came to the parking lot to inspect the area which was to be designed as a new commercial district. I was even mistaken for one of the officials since I was wearing a pair of glasses. ‘We indigenous people hate people who wear glasses’, I was told, my informants’ joke revealing the tension between local residents and the public sector, although working for the government is generally seen as the best choice of career among indigenous societies.

In the early morning of the 28<sup>th</sup> of March 2018, a banner which read ‘The Township Mayor Split Our People’ was hung at the vendors’ area (Figure 6. 1). The police and the ambulance were on standby beside the stalls. Laling broadcast this live on social media, asking villagers to join the protest. Unlike rallies on the streets of Taipei, the protest took place in a quiet village on a working day and did not attract much attention. However, the villagers showed much concern about the event, and held different opinions on reprofiling the vendors’ area (Figure 6. 2).

Eventually, the police evicted the original vendors, who had stood against the government’s decision for years. There was no *sbalay* ritual (see chapter 5.2.1) afterwards. The only ritual was the priests who led the villagers to pray to God to relieve their suffering. Families who ran businesses in the vendors’ area had lost their livelihood. The eviction of the vendors in Wufeng shows how people living in the

mountain struggle for their lives, particularly under the reality of limited resource allocation. This incident revealed the tension within the indigenous communities under contemporary bureaucratic politics, and their lack of distributive justice under the ‘party-state capitalism’. In the next subchapter, I describe how indigenous people suffer from such a predicament and how drinking is related to it.

### 6.1.3 Drink when the heart hurts

Drinking is always related to emotions, which reflect the triggering of a particular mood by an individual or group’s circumstances. According to our common sense, drinking is often linked to depression. There is no such an Atayal word that exactly matches the psychiatric meaning of depression. Atayal people use the word *inlungan* to refer to their thought, mind and heart (Egerod 1980:91). Taiwanese anthropologist Wang (2010) indicates that there are various expressions of *inlungan* among Atayal societies, however a common idea is the shared behavioural norm and belief. According to Wang (ibid.:411), there are a lot of discourses related to *inlungan*. *Inlungan* is inherited from *utux* (the supreme God) or ancestors. Many Atayal phrases contain *inlungan* and have different meanings: *uwui lungan* (feeling tired); *loka inlungan* (working hard); *blaq inlungan* (kindness, generosity); *yaqih inlungan* (bad idea, evil thoughts). *Inlungan* is a crucial concept of Atayal’s moral world that affects people’s interaction. The term *inlungan* then has been used as a metaphor to reflect whether people follow *Gaga*.

Nowadays, Atayal people use the Chinese word *xin* (心, heart) to express the notion of *inlungan*. The term most relevant to depression is expressed in Chinese Mandarin, *xin-tong* (心痛), which means ‘the heart hurts’. I repeatedly heard this way of expressing negative feelings. When the vendors were evicted, Mrs A’s family’s

situation caught my attention since it revealed the meaning of drinking when an individual's life stress and collective social suffering are superimposed on each other. She always uses *xin-tong* to describe her helplessness and hopelessness.

Mrs A is one of the first vendors who came to Ulay to run a food stand 20 years ago. She lives in the neighbouring *buluo* of Ulay, Mintuyu, where there are some prefabricated houses donated by World Vision International after a flood caused by the notorious Typhoon Aere in 2004. After the typhoon, unemployed residents developed addictions to alcohol. Since there are nine prefabricated houses scattered in that area, their neighbours jokingly call them '*Jiuchuang*' in Mandarin Chinese. The pronunciation of the number 'nine' in Chinese is '*jiu*', which has the same pronunciation as the word 'alcohol'. '*Jiuchuang*' thus also means 'the alcoholic village'.

Mrs A woke up early at 5:00 a.m. every day to prepare for her business. Before being a vendor, she worked with her husband as a builder in the city. After more than ten years of labour, the couple finally saved some money and were ready to run a campsite, while her son and husband built a tree house for future tourists. However, in 2004, Typhoon Aere destroyed their campsite and repairs caused the family to run up more than \$1 million NT in debt. Since her husband lost his life to illness, Mrs A has shouldered the entire household's financial burdens. However, her son began to drink, and her daughter has also suffered from an affective disorder which may have been exacerbated by chronic drinking.

On the eviction day, Mrs A fainted when the police tore down the bamboo scaffolding of her food stand. Her daughter wept and supported her. The eviction was then put on pause and Laling negotiated with the police to suspend the demolition and invited the villagers to dine together. A young man sat down beside me, thin and

unkempt, and asked me if I had a lighter. After learning that I was a doctor, he rolled up his trousers, showed me his legs, troubled by psoriasis that indicates a poor immune system affected by alcohol, and said ‘Hey, doctor, have you ever cared about me?’

That young man was Mrs A’s son Mr C, a heavy drinker. According to Mrs A, Mr C worked as a delivery man but lost his job when he began to drink, which was due to relationship problems. He fell in love with a girl who turned her back on one lover and went off with another. He went to karaoke in the village every day and could drink for free because there was always another woman to fall in love with him and pay him money. Although C is rarely sober now, he always attends big events and participates in the activities. The villagers still treat him as a member of the community without blaming him for his alcoholism, unlike Mrs A’s daughter, who suffered from domestic violence and started to drink after her divorce. In consequence, Mrs A has to take care of her jobless family members alone.

After the eviction, the old vendors set up a new area at another car park, which is less visible to tourists. Their business had been getting worse. According to Mrs A, her income had been cut in half. Her daughter became more anxious and restless and also began to drink more. She was soon admitted to a psychiatric ward after binge drinking induced the relapse of her affective disorder. Mrs A had to shuttle back and forth between Wufeng and Chutung City, which made running her business and taking care of the family even more difficult.

Such tribal conflicts reflect the historical results of colonial governance. After a long period of land deprivation, current indigenous people can only live their lives through the business of tourism. Along with the colonial process, the Atayal clan systems have broken down; social organisations are dominated by government

administrative departments. This change in social organisation leads to more conflicts between people and contemporary state bureaucracy. Mrs A's family, like many other families who cannot build good relationships with public sector institutions, benefit less from top-down resource allocation. They are a typical example of a vulnerable indigenous family suffering from poverty and drinking problems. In fact, when I asked the villagers about their drinkers, I got many similar stories to that of Mrs A's family, as well as expressions of feeling *xin-tong* (heart hurts).

There are still some people who state that they are seeing doctors and taking pills because of depression and insomnia, but most of them are the elites of the communities. Seldom do Atayal people develop such neurochemical selves (Rose 2003) and take psychiatric treatment for granted. For Atayal people, when the heart hurts, it does not only mean a person's mood is low. As mentioned previously, the idea of *inlungan* may refer to a common code of conduct and belief. By this logic, when Atayal people say that they feel their heart hurts, it means far more than an individual being upset. It is more like a feeling of a breakdown of the linkages within the community.

People drink when they feel 'heart hurt'. Apparently, they express helplessness, loneliness and anger for personal life stress, but individual emotions reflect a collective situation in which social rapport in a conflicted society is lacking. Indigenous people were generally considered to be optimistic and humorous by public opinion in Taiwan. This may in part be because of their open demeanour and explicit expressions of happiness and hospitality which then became part of a cultural stereotype. More work needs to be done to understand the cultural politics of emotion for indigenous societies. However, from Mrs A's family's story, we see that those emotions which cannot be reconciled through the practice of traditional



constraints end up being acted out through alcohol use. Alcohol can be the mediator of the conflicts but also the enhancer of anger. Drinking practices may be symbolic of healing but also hazardous. Hence, there is no longer a stable interpretative meaning of drinking.



Figure 6. 2 The food vendors' area, half of which had been torn down.

## 6.2 Drinking When the Land is Lost

### 6.2.1 A journey to recover lost territories: A Protest in Taipei

On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of October 2017, three days before Taiwan Restoration Day (光復節), indigenous rights activists including Panay organised a rally in Taipei City. It was day 243 of their campaign to fight for the land rights of the traditional indigenous territories. The rally was named 'A Journey to Recover Lost Territories' and there were about 30 people lined up, led by Amis (also called Pangcah) singers, Nabu and Panay, and documentary director, Mayaw Biho, travelling around Boai Special District. They passed by governmental agencies, counting the historical debts that

successive governments have owed to indigenous people, including misguided afforestation policies and hunting bans.

Panay, an indigenous singer from Taitung, who has a *Piyumanian* father and a Pangcah mother, is one of the most famous indigenous musicians, having introduced the song ‘*Baimijiu*’ to the public. She had been invited to perform at the 2016 Concert of the Presidential Office, but in February 2017 indigenous activists including Panay and her husband, Nabu, launched a campaign to protest the government’s new regulations, which were announced by the Council of Indigenous Peoples to exclude private lands from being recognised as traditional indigenous territory. They stationed themselves outside an MRT station exit and began their campaign by spending their nights on the streets (Figure 6. 3). On the day of the rally, they called their supporters to action in order to raise the visibility of their appeals. The rally moved and stopped at the offices of several public sector organisations responsible for mistreating indigenous people, as if on a journey through the history of oppression.



Figure 6. 3 Indigenous activists stationed outside of a MRT exit.

Taiwanese indigenous social movements towards the reclamation of lands and cultural values arose in the late 1980s in the form of a ‘pan-aboriginal cultural movement’, a term which has been subject to critiques and debates on the contradiction between pan-aboriginalism and tribalism (Chuang 2013:121-122). While the new government has apologised to indigenous people, the gesture is interpreted differently among them. Although the apology may fulfil the political correctness of transitional justice, some indigenous activists did not accept it, arguing that the government is still making mistakes and that those controversial policies have become more easily rationalised.



Figure 6. 4 The rally in front of the Executive Yuan. (Artistically modified photograph)

Nabu and Panay, and Mayaw Biho stayed in 228 Memorial Park and lived in tents from the beginning of 2017 onwards. By the end of October, they had already slept there for more than 240 days. During this time they held lots of talks by inviting speakers who support them and livestreaming these on social media such as Facebook. On the day of the rally, Nabu kept telling stories of indigenous people’s history of being suppressed, using a megaphone. When the rally passed National

Taiwan University Hospital, Nabu mentioned an Atayal doctor, Losing Watan. He said Losing Watan was trained as a doctor in this hospital, but he was not able to take care of his people. Losing Watan was probably the first Taiwanese indigenous doctor to be trained in Western medicine, but he was shot dead by the KMT government in 1954. What Nabu said is still a metaphor for indigenous people's current situation since the imbalance of medical care resources remains.

'This is not Taiwan "*Guangfujie*" (Restoration Day); this is indigenous "*Guangfu jie*"', Nubu shouted through his megaphone, once again using the homophonic pun that indigenous people are keen to play on by substituting different Mandarin Chinese words to create other meanings. Nubu also said that '*jie*' has various meanings in Mandarin Chinese if using different words. The first meaning is 'holiday' (節), the second is 'a knot' (結) and the third is 'inexorable doom' (劫). From their perspective, although the government changed along with the third party alternation in 2016,<sup>57</sup> transitional justice for indigenous people has not yet been achieved.

When the rally passed by the Forest Bureau, the staff had prepared a big bottle of water to welcome the protesters. Apparently, the government's attitude has changed since they understand the mistakes made in the past. In fact, the Forest Bureau was transformed from a profitable business institute into a public sector institution dedicated to environmental protection during the last century. However, the protesters were not satisfied. They asked the head of the Forestry Bureau to investigate and reveal how many indigenous people were arrested and sentenced under the unjust hunting ban laws. Finally, the rally stopped at the Executive Yuan, the supreme executive organ of Taiwan government. The indigenous activists used the analogy of

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<sup>57</sup> In 2000, Taiwan's political regime had the party alteration for the first time that Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) won the presidential election and ended the KMT's (Kuo Ming Tang) 50-year one-party autocracy. In 2008, KMT won back the political power until DPP won the ballot again in 2016.

‘domestic violence’ as the theme of a sarcastic action to criticise the government’s announcement of the ‘new partnership’ with indigenous groups (Figure 6. 4).

Representing the Taiwanese government in 2016, President Tsai apologised to indigenous people for the first time. Looking back to the night she won the 2016 presidential election, one of the promises she made in her speech was that she and her administration would be very humble. She emphasised this by saying ‘humble, humble and again humble’ (*qianbei, qianbei, zai qianbe*, 謙卑, 謙卑, 再謙卑). However, such ‘*qianbei*’ had been mocked as a lie by people using the wording ‘thousand cups’ in the ‘*Baimijiu*’ song: ‘Thousand cups, thousand cups, and one more thousand cups’ (*qianbei, qianbei, zai qianbei*, 千杯, 千杯, 再千杯). The activists camping in Taipei even made enamel cups that adapted such homophonous puns, printed with ‘No one is an outsider’ (Figure 6. 5). The activists emphasised that these cups are not used for drinking but, according to their propaganda, are ‘environmentally friendly’, ‘non-toxic, insulated and good for camping’.



Figure 6. 5 An example of a homophonous pun: an enamel cup that reads ‘No One is an Outsider’ designed by adapting ‘*qianbei*’ from the president’s speech (Photo retrieved on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2019 from the Indigenous Transformative Justice Facebook page)



### 6.2.2 The Deprivation of Land Rights

In the Chapter 6.1.1, I point out ‘party-state capitalism’ as the context for the limited resources for indigenous people. Land issues are the most significant resource issue faced in this context. This was a feature of the story of the alcohol-free *buluo* Kalibuan (Chapter 4.3). Although I describe the high tension in inter-ethnic relations because of land leasing and selling in central Taiwan, and there are similar issues elsewhere. Hazardous drinking has often been noted following the deprivation of land rights. This has been a major issue for pan-indigenous groups in Taiwan.

According to an Atayal elder’s oral history record (Zeng 2002), there were two traditional ways to trade land for Atayal people. One takes place when land is insufficient and people must move out but where the buyers can take care of themselves. The other kind, called ‘*tmnuang*’, is when people may be under attack or struggling to survive and seek shelter. Land was not traded for money but various kinds of objects, such as clothes, hunting rifles or even tobacco. The core value of the trades depended on ‘promises’. Although historical archives (Chen 2010) show that currency entered indigenous societies around 400 years ago when the Spanish and Dutch occupied Taiwan, more currency exchange took place during the Qing Dynasty when multi-ethnic encounters became more frequent. However, it was not until Japanese colonisation that currency exchange became more common since the Japanese used various modes such as gift exchange and the reward of labour through trading posts (Barclay 2017).

During the Japanese colonial period, a line of demarcation between Taiwan’s plains and mountains was drawn up under the segregation policy. This was intended to prevent the Han people from intruding on indigenous groups’ territory, but it was

gradually defeated by the Han's pursuit of land (Lo 2013). The colonial state had removed almost all indigenous land rights. In 1895, the first year of Japanese colonisation, the Japan Imperial government announced the outlawing of rules for state-owned *rinya* (林野, forests and wild land), asserting that all lands without a contract or a certificate document to prove the private ownership should be regulated as state-owned. By that time, the colonial administration not only held the authority to control national forest but also integrated the power of capitalists to manage the land efficiently (Horng 2004). Later on, the Chinese Nationalist (Kuomintang, KMT) government adopted almost identical land policies (Lo *ibid.*).

Under the governance of KMT, Taiwanese indigenous people were in an even more difficult situation. Following Japanese colonisation, the government occupied the mountain areas and took control of the forests. The KMT even allowed public sectors and private corporations to occupy the land. As Simon (2005) points out, indigenous people in Taiwan lived on the underside of the economic miracle and remained in poverty, while Han-owned corporations continuously embezzled indigenous people's lands.

In 1951, the KMT government carried out 'The Proposal of Life Improvement for People in Mountain Districts' (山地人民生活改進辦法), asking indigenous people to change their lifestyles in six domains: language, diet, clothing, housing, daily life and customs. Informants explained further: 'We were asked to rebuild the houses. We had to build modern kitchens and toilets. That cost a lot of money, and people got more frustrated.' The fact was 'People need money, and they may sell their lands.' During the 1980s, indigenous people initiated the 'Return Our Land Movement'. Although the government did return land to some indigenous people, in reality there were still some difficulties. People were not eligible to have land

reallocated to them if they had already been landlords. Those who acquired land would sell it right away under financial pressure and leave houses empty. For instance, in Wufeng and other indigenous townships, some people sold their land in order to receive the subsidies for low income households, since landowners are not eligible for this.<sup>58</sup> This is why there remain unused houses on unused land.

In the past decade, illegal drug use has increased rapidly in indigenous townships. Gangsters have recruited indigenous young people familiar with the landscape of the forests to find remote woods in the deep mountains. In order to keep the young men energetic enough to work and go the required distances during the night, the gangsters would provide amphetamines to these indigenous hired workers. Unfortunately, many young people then became addicted to these drugs. According to the government website's Open Information Announcement,<sup>59</sup> from 2012 to 2016 the yearly amount of forest damage had increased in value from 42 million to 180 million NT dollars (equal to \$14 to 60 million USD). For illegal loggers, a fine would be trivial. Young addicts hired by illegal loggers would rather sell or rent out their lands because they do not need to make money from their own lands. As such, indigenous people are gradually losing their inherited territories.

In recent years, the question of delimiting indigenous traditional territories has become one of the most important land issues. Private ownership as the basis of the state's current land system contrasts with indigenous people's traditional shared ownership of land. The traditional lands can be identified through everyday usage such as for farming, hunting and fishing. The vagueness of the territorial boundaries renders land claims difficult to pursue. This is similar to difficulties in claiming

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<sup>58</sup> According to the official rules, people are not eligible for the low-income household subsidy of the value of their movable property if their real estate exceeds the value that the government announces that year.

<sup>59</sup> These government agencies release government data which can be found on the website 'Government Open Data' (<https://data.gov.tw/>). Retrieved 9<sup>th</sup> August 2019.



indigenous land rights in other countries. In Australia, for example, indigenous people's representations of landscapes contrast with Western discourses that identify the lands as estates or claim spurious property rights over them (Layton 1997; 2008).

During my fieldwork, there were ongoing protests regarding the demarcation of traditional territories in Taipei, demanding the revision of 'Regulations on Land or Tribal Land Allocation for Indigenous People' which shows that private lands are not included in traditional indigenous territories (see Chapter 6.2.1). However, the protests have not earned recognition from all indigenous people and local activists hold different opinions. Some of my informants (who wished to remain anonymous) stand by the government's policy and consider that the new government has already made a leap forward in indigenous rights. To them, the new regulations are established under the Constitution of Taiwan, which ensures people keep their private lands as private property. Some of them have been participating in the demarcation of the traditional lands. They followed seniors travelling into the deep mountains, collecting Atayal migration stories. For them, it will be too late to be stuck in the dispute and not move forward, since this is the very moment that they have to start the demarcation of the traditional territory, before the elders pass away. Difficulties may derive from the specific situations of different groups. Many of the lands of indigenous groups who settle in Eastern Taiwan have been occupied by the state for military defence use or development of tourism, which coincides with what Laling, the Atayal activist in Wufeng, told me: 'People who live in the mountain would still own their lands, and trade their lands; however, most Amis (*Pancah*) people do not own their lands.'

Current land trade in Wufeng represents indigenous people's contemporary situation and competing pressures in the fight for their lives. Indigenous people may need to sell land in order to survive, but in doing so they lose land that supports their

livelihoods. Close to Hsinchu City, a rapidly developed city of technology industries, Wufeng has become an exotic leisure paradise for tech millionaires. Local indigenes try hard to escape from the mountains, while rich people rush into the mountains during holidays. More and more campervans and heavy motorcycles run along the narrow, winding and dangerous mountain roads. They hardly slow down while passing by the indigenous villages.

In this subchapter, I use two stories that describe drinking as symbolic violence related to land deprivation. The missing or deceased individuals could not tell their own stories, but other people's recollection of them reflects their collective anxiety about the land issues they face in the context of structural violence.

### **6.2.3 The mystery of the missing man**

The first story is about a missing old man. One day, when I was chatting with Xiangyi about how her husband got drunk with a neighbour after coming back from hunting, Xiangyi's husband, who was working in the Fire Bureau, made a call saying that he would be home late since he was out on a mission. 'They have been looking for them for several days,' Xiangyi said. It is not unusual to hear someone is lost in the mountains: news of missing climbers is quite often heard. However, it is rare for a local resident to get lost. Mr Lu, the Township councillor, posted the message on his personal Facebook page to ask the villagers to help find the old man together, now a common way of communicating with the public in indigenous communities.

A few days later I asked Xiangyi if they found the old man and she said no. There were rumours saying that the old man might have gone out after arguing with his wife. His wife had felt so guilty and had not been out of their house for many days. For

Atayal people in northern Taiwan, settled in steep mountains, houses are often far apart. Sometimes, people do not know their neighbours' updated situations.

There were also rumours that the old man might have got lost because he had been drinking too much and some said he might have fallen into a hepatic coma. However, as a doctor, I know that it is very unusual for a person to have a hepatic coma but still manage to walk such a long distance. Someone had spotted him in Wufeng town a few days previously. Since he did not have the cane and *kgiri* (bamboo back basket) which he used to carry whenever he went out, the villagers felt uneasy. A few days later when I talked to Xiangyi, she lowered her voice and spoke mysteriously:

*'Actually, there is a thing [...] It is said that he was murdered [...] Didn't you read the news? The land disputes in Huayuan Village. Some say that he appeared in the court few months ago [...] to testify against the illegal digging.'*

The mystery missing of the old man was just like the metaphor of the opaque future for Wufeng people. Was he drunk when he left the house? Was he really murdered? Did he report illegal deforestation to the court? If so, what for? For money or for justice? Although it could be pure speculation to link the old man's disappearance to controversies over land use, the rumours reflect the prevailing anxiety concerning development issues among indigenous groups.

#### **6.2.4 An old farmer's suicide**

The second anecdote is a suicide case. Among mental health issues, suicide is a popular indicator of levels of health and wellbeing. I have repeatedly heard stories of suicide among indigenous people and also read lots of public health reports regarding suicide. However, there was one suicide in particular in Wufeng that caught my

attention. Echoing Widger's (2015) argument that suicide should be studied from a social, historical and ecological standpoint, I will recount a story based on my ethnographic work in Wufeng, in response to the issue of suicide and the natural environment.<sup>60</sup>

In March 2018, a 63-year-old Atayal farmer, Mr Tseng, committed suicide by swallowing pesticide after drinking heavily. In the previous August, Mr Tseng had been reported for breaking the Water and Land Preservation Act, for which he was fined 140 thousand NT dollars (around 4700 USD) since his land had been dug without application beforehand. Mr Tseng was illiterate and he knew nothing about the law. He was not eligible to receive low-income household subsidies since he had owned land. However, after suffering from severe gout for 20 years, Mr Tseng could not work due to the distortion of his fingers and limbs, so he rented out his land to others to farm at the very low price of 80 thousand NT dollars (2700 USD) per year. Mr Tseng received the fine in February of 2019 and, unable to afford it, committed suicide by swallowing pesticide. During the church funeral, Mr Tseng's cousin said 'We call that slow suicide. He did not kill himself in a violent way. He had prepared for that.' He explained further: 'My cousin has not received education, but he used his body to talk to the government and ask you people who have received education to speak for him.'

Mr Tseng had lived in Wufeng his whole life. Indigenous people used to live in the mountains, hunting and farming, but today hunting is restricted by the state. Most residents in Wufeng are engaged in agriculture, while others may do odd jobs,

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<sup>60</sup> The content of this section has been written in a brief version in a comment article with Harry Yi-Jui Wu which was published in *Lancet Planetary Health* as 'Suicide and the natural environment: an Indigenous view' (Wu and Wu 2018). The comment was a response to Helbich et al.'s (2018) study that indicates that exposure to natural environments lowers suicide rates.

especially physical labour. According to Hsinchu County Government's statistical data, Wufeng's total Area of Registered Land is 20,777 hectares. Although there are still 1661 hectares of farming and pasturable land, there are only 425 hectares actually being cultivated. Atayal people describe Wufeng as *cinrgyax* in their own language, which means 'the mountains are just in front of you', meaning there is not enough space to cultivate. Indigenous people used to live in the mountains but the area is now protected by state law and has become a popular vacation spot for those from urban areas.

When I returned to Wufeng in 2017, after completing fieldwork there from 2012 to 2015, the most impressive change was the increase of land-selling advertisements along the roads. The remains of landslides could be seen everywhere (Figure 6. 6). Meanwhile, a store catering to campers appeared in the biggest mall in Hsinchu City. According to the news,<sup>61</sup> the population of campers in Taiwan had reached two million in 2017, and the number of campsites had increased from around 800 to 1800 during the previous five years.

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<sup>61</sup> The news was retrieved from the televised programme 'A special report "The Secret Under the Tents" (帳篷下的秘密)' on TVBS Channel on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2017 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DOPm7r65rbw>).



Figure 6. 6 The remains of a landslide in Wufeng.

The burgeoning campsites lead to continuous deforestation. In 2017, a local government billboard advertising the Hsinchu County's achievement of joining WHO's Western Pacific Healthy Cities programme was changed into propaganda to encourage local people to report illegal deforestation: 'Love the land, do not destroy.' But beside the billboard, there were even more advertisements for land trade set up by estate agencies (Figure 6. 7).



Figure 6. 7 Before 2016, a local government's billboard, advertising the Hsinchu County's achievement of joining WHO Western Pacific Healthy Cities programmes; in 2017, a government campaign encouraging local people to report illegal deforestation, besides advertisements for land trade set up by real estate agencies.

Mr Tseng's situation was not an isolated case. Many people have been fined in the same way. As previously mentioned, in recent years, local government has been encouraging people to report improper cultivation and illegal deforestation since the development of farms and campsites has been rapid. Prosecutors receive around 50,000 NTD (1666 USD) as a reward. Local people use their land for small-scale farming, but in recent years some have started to build campsites due to the growth in popularity of camping for city-dwellers. There remains a lack of rules for campsite management, and more and more out-of-town business people use legal means to conceal illegal land trade and build large campsites.

Suicides like Mr Tseng's are not common in Wufeng, but it did not surprise locals, including his neighbour: 'His mother just passed away. He had severe gout. He drank before he swallowed down pesticide. He thought he did not do anything wrong.' From a psychiatrist's viewpoint, no suicide is mono-causal and suicide itself represents various meanings. Durkheim's (2005) theories may be useful to understand suicide as a manifestation of social change. However, scholars have suggested paying more attention to suicide as the product of intertwined cultural, ecological and psychological factors, as well as the various meanings of the act, such as dialogue showing protest versus monologue demonstrating the wish to die (Marecek 2006; Marecek and Senadheera 2012; Widger 2015). Mr Tseng's suicide, which is determined but also dialogic, reveals the deeper meanings regarding the relation of the natural environment to an individual's suffering.

Indigenous people in Taiwan have higher suicide rates than non-indigenous people (Ko and Hsieh 1994), while high suicide rates in agricultural areas related to the accessibility of pesticides indicate suicide prevention could be made more effective (Chang et al. 2011; 2012). However, as an old Chinese saying goes, 'A

falling leaf knows about the fall.’ Mr Tseng’s story reflects how minorities and indigenous peoples were neglected and excluded from the state’s development, as well as how the natural environment is damaged by colonial regimes and exploited by urban people. Thus we may need to shift our narrative towards deeper descriptions of the ever-changing environment and human life contexts, as well as the geopolitics affecting human health.

Echoing Widger's (2015) call to study suicide in a small place to see large issues, suicide here needs to be seen as socially, historically and ecologically constructed. Regarding suicide and the natural environment, a fundamental question is what is nature? Then, how do human beings engage with their environment? What happens to their land? Singer’s (2016) work explores new ways of understanding the environment as a dynamic system subject to anthropogenic deterioration. He uses the term ‘pluralea’ to indicate the adverse intersection of environmental crises and their implications on health. The high prevalence of alcohol use among Taiwanese indigenous people, underestimated depression and risk of suicide reflect the same idea. These mental health issues are all embedded in the history of the continuous destruction of the natural environment, and the difficulty of different ethnic groups living together on limited land.

## **6.3 Intoxicated diaspora**

### **6.3.1 Paolyta: Drug food behind the economic miracle**

I had my first cup of Paolyta in front of a grocery store in Wufeng. On that day, villagers were queuing in front of the Village Office for the ‘relief materials’ donated by a local Buddhist organisation. Not far away from the Village Office, several



residents gathered in front of a grocery store, gossiping about their daily affairs. This is part of everyday life in the mountainous indigenous villages where charities donate goods and materials to help the poor. The boss gave me a cup of black liquid which tasted sweet and bitter (the local nurse said it smells like ‘brown mixture’, a kind of cough syrup in the local health station), describing it as her treat. Paolyta has become one of the most common everyday conversational aids; after a cup, people start chatting.

Paolyta is one of the most popular caffeinated alcoholic energy drinks among indigenous groups. Its full name is Paolyta-B, it contains multiple herbal ingredients, a synthesis of vitamins and amino acids, and is 10% alcohol. The Paolyta bottle has a label printed with a serial number: 衛檢藥製字第 03870 號, meaning it has passed the Taiwan Food and Drug Administration’s inspection. Drinks like Paolyta-B are regulated under the ‘Pharmaceutical Affairs Act’ which states that ‘medicinal liquor’ can only be sold in pharmacies, but it can still be found in betel nut street stands and grocery stores in the indigenous villages.

The origins of these drinks can be traced back 50 years. Although alcohol was regulated by monopoly policy during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Members of the Legislative Yuan wrote to the government in the 1970s, claiming that drinks like Paolyta were actually ‘medicine’ and did not need to be taxed. From the 1950s to the 1960s, Taiwan launched a series of development projects and entered the US-led capitalist system under US military aid (Chang 1965; Chiang 2014). From the 1960s onwards, indigenous people began to leave their hometowns for industrial cities and were thought to contribute to the so-called economic miracle of Taiwan (Ku 2005). A relationship between workers with adverse psychosocial work circumstances and injuries and alcohol use has been reported (Cheng et al. 2012; Cheng et al. 2015). As

described by Lin (2017), a Taiwanese writer who has been an overseer who supervises workers, alcoholic energy drinks mixed with coffee and papaya milk as ‘cocktails’ are fashionable in workplaces.

The popularity of caffeinated alcoholic energy drinks amongst the indigenous working-class reveals a growing public health issue that corresponds to a modern ‘drug food’, a term coined by Mintz (1985) to describe psychotropic foods distributed across a global marketplace as part of the history of colonialism. As introduced in Chapter 1.2.4, drug foods were brought to colonised areas by Westerners to control labour power (Jankowiak and Bradburd 1996; Bradburd and Jankowiak 2003). As previously mentioned, Paolyta advertising has targeted labourers, with TV advertisements even using slogans such as ‘The energy for tomorrow’ or ‘Let’s create the economic miracle together’ to suggest masculinity and reciprocity under the development of the state (Figure 6. 8). Most labourers are indigenous people, but they do not necessarily buy these drinks spontaneously. Some of my informants told me that their bosses ‘feed’ them this herbal alcoholic medicine in order to encourage them to work harder and for longer.



Figure 6. 8 TV advertisements for Paolyta-B.

Yang (2005) mentions that when Paiwan people moved to the north to find jobs in the 1980s, the Paolyta Company even provided them free accommodation and the space for Sunday services. Currently, the company also runs a charity foundation to

support education in rural and remote areas. Moreover, the Christian head of Paolyta Company even established a Christian foundation to fund local churches. Many indigenous churches have been given ‘Gospel Cars’ for gospel missions which have yellow and green stripes, just like the design of the Paolyta label.

Although Paolyta should only be sold in the pharmacy, it is distributed to local stores using a variety of legal loopholes. Moreover, in indigenous villages, adults frequently ask young people to buy it from the grocery stores since teenagers can buy alcohol easily, regardless of age restrictions.<sup>62</sup> Hence, Paolyta has become popular among indigenous adolescents. For local teenagers, Paolyta is not negatively stigmatised like beer or rice wine. However, it has become a social drink to build up solidarity and masculinity. Nowadays, Paolyta is even taken as the basic ingredient of the indigenous style of ‘cocktails’ (Figure 6. 9). Most young indigenous people demonstrate how they make their cocktails through online media, like YouTube (Figure 6. 10).

Indigenous cocktails are also available at some local tourist spots. They are mixed in various kinds of drinks, each with its specific name. They do not have standardised recipes with precise measurements of the ingredients but are mixed in a relatively freehand style. This reflects another example of the creolised culture of indigenous people, which symbolises their creolised life and identity. Furthermore, some brand names of the cocktails even imply resistance to health narratives. For instance, one cocktail has the same name as the Chinese abbreviation for a health insurance card, ‘*Jian bao ka*’. Mixed with Jianluo (a Calpis-like drink made by lactic acid fermentation), Paolyta and coffee, it is named after the Chinese pronunciation of the first words of each ingredient of the drink.

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<sup>62</sup> In Taiwan, the legal drinking age, which means the minimum age at which a person can legally consume alcohol beverages, is 18.



Tiehua Music Village, Hualien. (Retrieved on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2019 from <https://www.instazu.com/media/1911591753241498288>).



Figure 6. 10 Indigenous youtubers demonstrate the ways to make indigenous cocktails with Paolyta-B. (Retrieved on 6<sup>th</sup> November, 2019 from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rmuVBLNLepl&t=191s>)

Name of cocktails	Ingredients
Jian bao ka (health insurance card)	Jianluo*, Paolyta and Coffee *a Calpis-like drink made by lactic acid fermentation
The love of <i>buluo</i>	Rice wine, iced Sprite
The taste of romance	Rice wine, taro* milk tea *Taro used to be the stable food for some ethnic groups, like Tao
Taitung Whisky	Rice wine, Oolong tea
Miman	Rice wine, cranberry juice
Green storm	Rice wine, green tea
Snow dance	Millet wine, Gold Medal Taiwan Beer
Red in Snow	Paolyta-B, Taiwan Beer
Blood is thicker than water	Paolyta-B, rice wine
Everlastingly new	Ricewine, Vitali* *a soda drink that contains multiple vitamins
Lovers in the construction sites	Paolyta-B, Vitali* or Sarsaparilla** *Popular around No. 11 Coastal Highway ** Popular around No. 9 Coastal Highway
Burning firebird	Rice wine, chicken
Blood diamond	Paolyta-B, rice wine

Mifen	Rice wine, diet tea
Black humour	Paolyta-B, Kuonong Milk* *A popular brand of extended shelf life milk among indigenous communities.
Mikanong	Rice wine, coffee, Kuonong Milk

Table 6. 1 The lists of popular indigenous cocktails among indigenous communities (also see Figure 6.9).

### 6.3.2 Indigenous labourers in Hsinchu

Since 1980, Taiwanese indigenous people have experienced a rapid transformation which includes a rise in income and education and a massive population outflow from traditional communities to urban areas (Huang and Liu 2016). Currently, most of the adult indigenous population is engaged in labouring work. According to the government's statistical data,<sup>63</sup> the indigenous population aged 15 and above in 2018 was 431,975 people, of which 61.34% (264,958) were in the labour force. In 2019, the Mayor of Taoyuan City announced that the population of indigenous people in Taoyuan City had reached 74,000 and would exceed that in Tatung County, which has been seen as a typical indigenous home area, within two years. Although there were indigenous traditional districts in such a municipality, the growing indigenous population still shows the trend of non-stop migration from rural Eastern Taiwan to the urban West.

I have done fieldwork in Hsinchu City, a territory far smaller than Taoyuan City in scale but which has been one of the rapidly developed and urbanised cities in Taiwan (Figure 6. 11). Currently, the population of indigenous people in Hsinchu City is approximately 4000. Most migrated from their home villages in Eastern and Southern Taiwan. As previously mentioned, the Amis and Paiwan are the two major ethnic groups, while there are also people from groups such as Atayal and Sediq.

<sup>63</sup> The data was retrieved from Summary of Employment Survey for Indigenous People in 2018, published by Council of Indigenous Peoples, Taiwan.

These people moved to Hsinchu in the 1980s when the city started to develop rapidly with the establishment of Hsinchu Science Park,<sup>64</sup> set up based on the government's strategy to create a Silicon Valley of Taiwan as the home of high technology companies including semiconductor, computer, telecommunication and optoelectronics industries. A developing city has a high demand for manpower for infrastructure constructions which is why so many indigenous people came here. Population continued to grow in the transforming city, where more construction of commercial and residential buildings continues. Amis and Paiwan people mainly move together with siblings and neighbours<sup>65</sup> and engage in similar kinds of work. Amis people mostly engage in formwork, such as moulding and casting in construction, while Paiwan people engage in ironwork.

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<sup>64</sup> Hsinchu Science Park is an industrial park established by the government of Taiwan. The official website of Hsinchu Science Park Bureau (HSPB) reads: 'Driven by the government's policy initiative, the Hsinchu Science Park (HSP) was initiated on December 15, 1980. Under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Science and Technology, the HSPB is given the responsibility of developing, operating and managing the park.' (<https://www.sipa.gov.tw/english/index.jsp>) Hsinchu Science Park came up with the idea of building a science and technology park like that of Silicon Valley in the US; thus, the park is set up next to the National Tsing Hua University and National Chiao Tung University in Hsinchu.

<sup>65</sup> Amis is the biggest indigenous ethnic group in Taiwan, accounting for a third of the total indigenous population. The other name of the group is *Pancah*. Most reside in the Coastal Range and Plains in Eastern Taiwan, mainly in Hualien and Taitung. The Amis population is approximately 200,000.



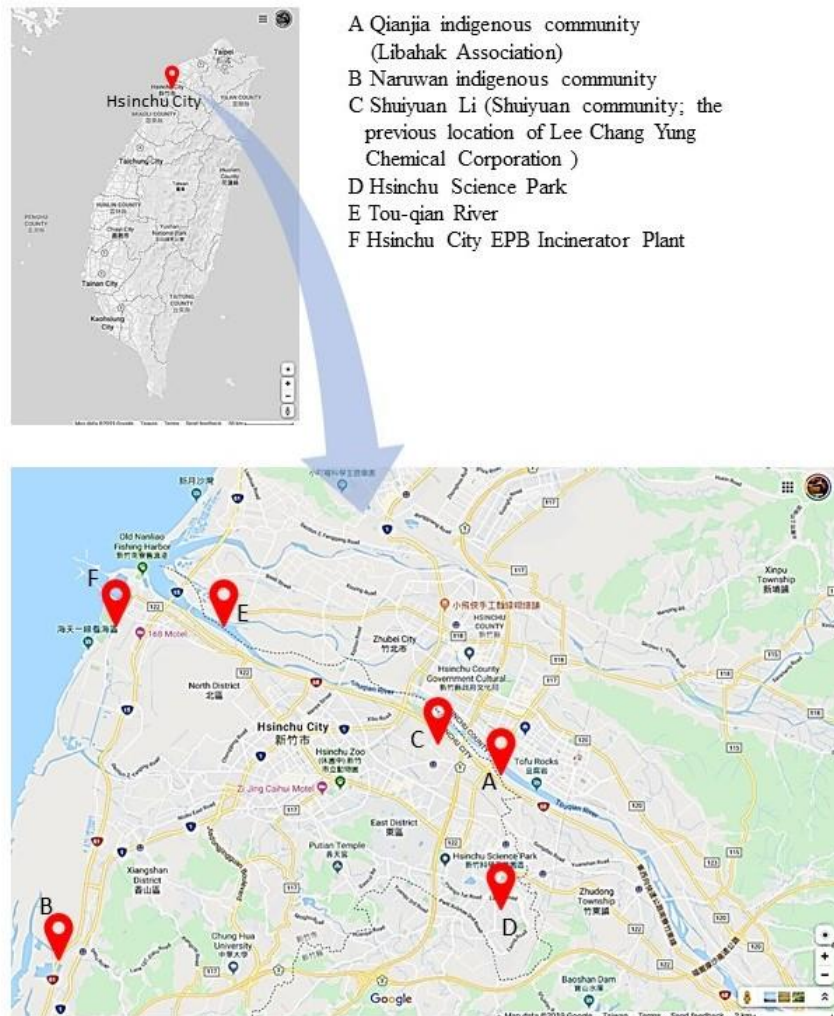


Figure 6.11 The distribution of urban indigenous communities in Hsinchu City and other related sites

There are several urban indigenous communities settled in Taiwan's Western coast cities which have their background of land dispossession and displacement during the settler-colonial histories (Sugimoto 2019). In Hsinchu city, there are three urban indigenous communities, with residents consisting of multi-ethnic indigenous groups. Qianjia is the largest indigenous community and residents have settled down by the riverside by renting the former accommodation of the railway workers. The two major groups in Qianjia community are Amis and Paiwan. These people all have their life histories of migration.<sup>66</sup> According to my informants, Amis people generally

<sup>66</sup> The migration of Amis people can be traced back to the period of Japanese rule (1895-1945). The oldest urban indigenous group may be those who resettled in urban Taipei. Since the 1960s, more Amis left their hometowns to work in the docks in Kilung, Taipei and Kaoshung along with the development of



choose to become officially registered as Hsinchu City citizens, while Paiwan people would rather not register their households since most of them still have inherited lands in their home villages.

Shuiyuan Li, located half a mile away from Qianjia, is another community which has approximately 20 households of indigenous people and is where an episode of severe industrial pollution occurred in the 1980s. After the battle against Lee Chang Yung Chemical Corporation (LCY Chemical Corp) who emitted poisonous gas and water, the government then announced a ban on outsiders constructing new buildings on that site for fifty years. After that, local people maintained the site's agrarian landscape as a 'place guarding' strategy (Lin 2015), which keeps the environment as a rural-like area in a cosmopolitan city. Therefore, Shuiyuan became a place that attracts immigrant indigenous people to settle down.

Naruwan, inhabited by 100% Amis people, is an indigenous community located at the seaside in the west of Hsinchu City. It was set up in the 1980s while a group of Amis people, who were actually from the same village in Taitung, sailed from the East coast to the Northwest. It was because of one of the nurses working in Wufeng Culture and Health Station was a Naruwan resident that I first learned of the Naruwan community. When I visited the community, people were still mourning for a drowned couple who went out to sea during the days of typhoon. There are also about 20 households in the Naruwan community, mostly engaged in deep-water fishery, while the younger generation chooses to work as labourers. Like the Qianjia community,

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the ocean fishery industry. Many older urban indigenous informants, mostly between 50-70, have experience of deep-water fishery. They would stay on the ocean for months to years. After the 1980s, deep-water fishery declined, and those Amis sailors then moved to other suburban areas to work as builders on construction sites, most working with concrete molds. That was the early history of indigenous communities in Hsinchu city.

scattered beer cans and other scenes of everyday commensality can be seen in Naruwan.



Figure 6. 12 A fishing net full of beer cans on the embankment beside Naruwan community.



Figure 6. 13 Amis people of Naruwan community celebrate Mother's Day by commensality and newly invented rituals. In the right pictures, men are washing mothers' feet to show their respect to mothers. (Artistically modified photograph)

Life stories represent the typical life trajectories of indigenous people. Tou-mu, aged 50, lives in Shuiyuan Li. He is a foreman leading a group of foreign workers to do formwork in Hsinchu City.

*'I left home to work when I was fourteen years old. I was the oldest son and had to support my four younger brothers at home. I worked in a metalworking factory and lost three fingers due to an accident. When I was sixteen, I went*

*deep-water fishing twice, each time took me two years. Then I came back to Taiwan and started to do the formwork. I had taken part in constructions in Taipei, Taoyuan. I came to Hsinchu after my boss went bankrupt.*

*I have been living in Hsinchu city for twenty years since the city has been developed along with the construction of high-speed rail. When I first came to Qianjia, we indigenous workers would get together to chat and drink after getting off work. We would start to drink from 5:00 p.m. until midnight. I had a guitar, which I even took with me to the distant ocean. I stopped singing once I fell down and broke the guitar. I moved to Shuiyuan in 2015 after my house in Qianjia caught fire.'*

(Tou-mu, interviewed in Shuiyuan Li)

Chengwen is an Amis in his 40s. His wife and kids call him 'Ironman' since his job is to tie iron wire every day.

*'I started to tie iron wire when I was 23. Before then, I did food processing and automobile repair. Then a friend of mine suggested doing wirework to me. I have been doing this for almost twenty years. It is a tough job. Think about it, the iron wires become extremely hot, up to sixty degrees. I have worked in the South. I also took part in highway construction. I came to Hsinchu ten years ago. It is nice to live here because it is windy in Hsinchu. The pay is also higher. In the South I got paid 1,700 NT dollars a day; here I get 2,500 NT dollars a day.*

*I met indigenous workers from everywhere when I started to do wirework. I still remember a Truku<sup>67</sup> friend, who only drank two kinds of alcohol, Paolyta*

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<sup>67</sup> The Truku people are the fifth biggest Taiwanese indigenous group in population (approximately 30,000). They mainly reside in the northern part of Hualien County. The Truku launched the 'name

*and rice wine. His boss asked him to do a night shift work by offering him alcohol. Within six years of starting to work, he got liver cirrhosis. His wife abandoned him since he treated her violently. Then I spent time taking care of him in the hospital. I used to drink a lot but I have changed since I have three kids now. I always tell myself not to do things badly in front of the kids.*

*I'm an Amis but most of my friends are Paiwan. My wife is a Paiwan. My father left my mother after meeting a foreign girl when deep-water fishing. Now I have a good relationship with my parents-in-law. I have been thinking that maybe I can ask a favour of them, to look after my kids in Pingtung,<sup>68</sup> but currently I think it is better to keep the kids with us here for better education.'*

(Chengwen, interviewed in Qianjia)

Although blue-collar urban indigenous people are the group who have been marginalised, what these accounts tell us is that urban indigenous residents are relatively better off both materially and in terms of social capital compared to people who stay in their home villages in rural townships. I asked Chengwen why he would not go back to his home village. He replied that it cost too much money to buy drinks for the relatives in order to fulfill kinship obligations. Buying drinks is a gesture to show their concern for relatives who live in the home villages, who are considered to have fewer resources. However, that obligation may cause a financial burden. Instead, urban indigenous people could live an equal life and establish quasi-kin relationships.

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rectification' campaign in the 1990s, and they were officially recognised as an indigenous group in 2004.

<sup>68</sup> Pingtung County is a county in Southern Taiwan. It is divided into one city, three urban townships, 21 rural townships and eight mountain indigenous townships. The indigenous ethnic groups are mainly Paiwan and Rukai, whereas 90% of indigenous people are Paiwan. The indigenous communities are mostly settled around *Kahulugan* (Taimu Mountain), which is seen as the Holy Mountain by both Paiwan and Rukai groups.

The life story of indigenous people in Hsinchu City is a miniature of the collective life experience of urban indigenous peoples in Taiwan. Their sweat has watered the state's economic growth. They have tried to make their second home village in a rapidly developing city, but still live in a marginal area of the metropolis. They have built the infrastructure for the technology industries and still build luxury houses for people who benefit from them. As for drinking, particularly looking at Paolyta, the relations of production of this 'medicinal liquor' not only reflect the indigenous people's colonial situation of being controlled, but also reveal the roles of such 'drug foods'.

### **6.3.3 *Fengnianji*, conviviality on the riverbank**

Conviviality among indigenous groups has been heavily documented, and the convivial sociality of multiculturalism in everyday life is also stressed (Overing and Passes 2000; Wise and Velayutham 2009). '*Fengnianji*' (as it is called in Mandarin Chinese), which is derived from harvest festivals, has become the common form of social events among urban indigenous communities made up of multiethnic groups. Settled at the margin of the cities, the drinking practices of these urban indigenous communities reveal a specific affective side of social relationships that reflect these people's life destinies.

At the end of summer. On the bank of the Tou-qian River the air was mixed with the fragrance of grass and flowers, the odour of waste and petroleum and the smell of sweat and beer. Urban indigenous communities in Qianjia, Hsinchu city were holding their Mother's Day festival. Qianjia is located at the South bank of the Tou-qian River, under the bridge that connects Hsinchu City and Chubei City. The bridge has been extremely busy due to its controversial design which features an extra exit which leads to the riverbank, while dump trucks carrying river gravel make congestion even

worse. The design of the bridge reveals the uneven development of the city, that only people living beside the riverbank face the danger and dust caused by the trucks (Figure 6. 14).



Figure 6. 14 The design of the bridge reveals the uneven development of the city. (The red pin on the map: Qianjia)

It was towards evening and everyone was chatting in an excited mood with loud karaoke music in the background. I was sitting between two Amis men under a semi-open-air tent in Qianjia, sipping the beer that they poured into my plastic cup. One of them was a foreman, who led a group of workmen building luxury mansions in the city. He set off strings of firecrackers when he arrived. The other one was a chef, who runs a food stand, which was named ‘*pakelang*’ in Amis language, meaning a ritual held right after completing something. He sells braised snacks and Amis cuisine in a park on the opposite bank. The two men were at primary school together in Hualien 40 years ago and met each other tearfully in Hsinchu. The foreman tossed his glass of beer to me, saying ‘Hey bro, do you know, this cup tastes so bitter!’

The festivals are called ‘*fengnianji*’ (豐年祭) in their current common language, Mandarin Chinese. They hold their annual harvest festivals as if they celebrate at home.<sup>69</sup> From July to August, many indigenous communities hold their own annual

<sup>69</sup> Indigenous groups in Taiwan have their various rituals. Throughout July, many indigenous tribes, including Amis, Paiwan and Puyuma, take turns to hold their own ceremonies along the eastern coastal area.

festival ceremonies in their home villages and urban indigenous people hold their harvest ceremonies later, mostly from September to December. Some people choose not to travel back to their home villages for the ceremonies because of busy work schedules or distance. I was told that they choose not to go home during the season of festivals because travel may be expensive. In addition to the cost of transport or petrol, they have to buy drinks, and also spend time drinking with their relatives.

In order to hold *fengnianji*, people mimic the process of traditional rules, that the ceremony should be hosted by an elder. In Qinjia, an Amis old man was elected to become their ‘*Tou-mu*’, as the symbolic leader of the community. Traditionally, the elder in Amin is called *mato’asay*, and one can only upgrade to this level by means of a strict process of ceremonies over the years. In Qianjia, they use the Chinese Mandarin term ‘*Tou-mu*’ to refer to the role and elect one of the first comers who have settled down in that place to serve the role.

Besides *fengnianji*, they hold party-like events in their communities on various holidays throughout the year, such as Father’s Day, Mother’s Day, Mid-autumn Festival and Christmas. Traditional chanting is replaced by karaoke, which is always a major activity during these events. Everyone takes a turn singing their favourite songs, which are mostly Chinese or Taiwanese pop songs. Some of the songs have sad lyrics about heart-breaking stories and drinking and smoking, but they sing them in a merry mood.

All in the community are welcome to take part. ‘The more the merrier,’ they said and invited me to join. Sometimes, each family prepares a dish, and sometimes they use the community’s public funding for food preparation. They also kill pigs as part of the ceremonies (Figure 6. 15). Once I saw them prepare a pig through a mock-hunting process. They picked the pig from the pig house that they built in front

of their houses. They were not familiar with killing pigs, which is still an important part of many indigenous ethnic groups' traditions, and seemed to be not entirely competent at doing so. They hit the head of a large pig but it did not die immediately. Instead it ran around, bumping into things before collapsing. Other little pigs ran with it, and the scene looked very cruel. Ideally they would not let this happen, but the community are no longer good at hunting. Finally they shot the pig with a rifle, which is actually illegal to use in the city and then moved the pig using a farm dump cart. After burning and shaving it, they cut it into pieces as they do in the home villages. Traditionally, they distribute the raw meat to all the households in the villages, building connections and sharing blessings with each other. In urban communities, they hold barbeques together instead. These procedures show how indigenous people try to copy their ancestors' ways of life but still need to practise in a compromised style.



Figure 6. 15 Indigenous people in Qianjia, Hsunchu City were preparing *fengnianji* by killing a pig, like they do in their home villages.

#### **6.3.4 'Jin du' and 'Wen zhu' in everyday commensality**

Since being far away from their home villages, urban indigenous people have developed a convivial style of everyday commensality. Such a phenomenon has prevailed in almost all urban indigenous communities around Taiwan. From the



experience of my fieldwork, the very specific two phrases I heard when having meals with indigenous people were '*jin du*' (進度) and '*wen zhu*' (穩住). They would shout these two phrases in Mandarin Chinese during the feast with an exaggerated intonation, '*jin du*' meaning 'to catch up on the progress' and '*wen zhu*' 'to be stable'. When people see someone is not yet drunk enough, they shout '*Jin du! Jin du!*' On the contrary, when someone loses control and acts out, as a reminder they would say '*Wen zhu! Wen zhu!*' An interesting phenomenon is that indigenous people speak Mandarin Chinese in different intonations when they have conversations with different groups. If they reckon who they are talking to to be on their own side, they would accentuate some words and drag out the last letter of the sentences as a specific style of 'coding switching'.<sup>70</sup>

Drinking practices are carried out between '*jin du*' and '*wen zhu*' so indigenous people valorise their roles and control how much they drink through this collective constraint. '*Jin du*' is for showing loyalty and building up the internal solidarity of the group, and '*wen zhu*' ensures the consistency and harmony of the external image. Moreover, when the outsiders like me take part in the gathering and are asked to catch up with the pace of drinking, it is a message of inclusion: a friendly invitation to become a member.

When I first visited Qianjia, I happened to join a barbeque on a Saturday afternoon, chatting with the indigenous residents at a table full of beer cans and wine bottles. A cup of sorghum liquor initiated my first communication with them. After learning I was a doctor, they started to make jokes. A handicapped man, who was injured in the workplace after falling from a height, hit his prosthetic limb and asked 'Hey, doctor, why don't I feel anything when hitting my foot?' Another guy made a

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<sup>70</sup> I borrow the term from linguistic usage that describes a speaker's language alternation between two or more tongues.

joke about his friend: ‘Hey, doctor, he has got a problem with his dick! What would you do for him?’

Most of the Qianjia residents live in accommodation which used to be the block-houses that housed foreign workers who took part in the railway construction. After the railway was completed, the owner rented out the houses to indigenous people. The community live beside a gravel factory, which supplies the building materials to construction companies to build the luxury mansions in the city. I collected their life stories by taking part in everyday commensality. They shared their experience of being ‘on the run’<sup>71</sup> when the police first started to notice the existence of the community.

*‘They all hide at the exit of the culvert under the bridge,’* said a Paiwan worker.

I asked him, ‘Why did the police officer come here?’ He answered:

*‘To catch drunk drivers of course! When I first moved here, they often came here for routine spot checks. I had been stopped three times in a month. I have quit drinking for many years, so I wouldn’t feel afraid. But the question is, why do you see me (as a drinker) just because my skin is dark?’*

Some of the residents told me the police even chased them into their houses:

*‘They even woke me up to do the breath test!’*

Such commensality is like an everyday cathartic ritual to share embarrassing and unhappy things. Therefore, the barbeque has become one of the most common activities for urban indigenous people, no matter whether during ceremonies or in everyday life. Taking part in such commensality has become an activity to build up

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<sup>71</sup> I borrow the title of sociologist Alice Goffman (2015)’s book, *On the Run: Fugitive Life in an American City*, which talks about the climate of fear and suspicion pervading daily life in Black American communities, to describe urban indigenous people’s ‘fugitive life’ that has been criminalised under an unjust system.

sociability. During their time off work, everyone comes outdoors and takes out everything from their fridges to share. Mostly they talk of trivial things in their everyday lives, but they also change their opinions toward things happening in the community, such as economic activities like loans and rotating savings. They smoke and drink. Their conversations are interspersed with jokes, and they speak sarcastically about themselves. Sometimes they sing, with or without a guitar.

They sit around a low table, putting all kinds of alcohol on the table. Compared to the indigenous villages in rural areas, there were fewer rice wine bottles but a greater number of more expensive wines. Something commonly seen is Paolyta-B. Sometimes they share luxury wine but have some tacit principles, like not sharing with community members who have bad drinking habits or improper lifestyles. They set limits for those who may be blamed at home if they drink too much.

There is a paradoxical mindset involved in their perception of the concept of health and the effects of alcohol. Being labourers, most people think drinking Paolyta is a good way to increase their physical power and give them a boost. They believe that the herbal ingredients are healthy, which can balance the negative effect of alcohol. There is even a collective mood to dispute the saying that drinking could be harmful. Below are some excerpts from a conversation we had during a barbeque:

*‘Of course we know that sausages may cause colon cancer, and drinking leads to liver cancer. But to be honest, if you take all of these away from me, I don’t want to live anymore.’*

*‘That famous toxicologist, Dr Lin, he still died early.’*

*‘And that famous astrologist, what was her name? She passed away at a young age as well.’*

I finally realised that they believe biomedical doctors and fortune tellers are all professionals who talk nonsense. However, there are some people who cut down their drinking due to health concerns. It may be after a major health impact occurs, like a diagnosis of gastrointestinal bleeding, liver disease or stroke. The fact is that it is not until symptoms give them unbearable physical discomfort that they stop drinking.

Due to the long period of colonisation and outflow of population, some of the indigenous rituals have declined. In recent years, along with the rising trend of cultural revitalisation, some local ceremonies have gradually acquired attention and respect among tribal societies. Public sectors are also keen to host ceremonies by using their administrative resources in order to promote tourism. In recent years, some young indigenous activists have tried to bring back more traditional ceremonies to their home villages. They criticise that those government-led ceremonies represent the logic of colonisation, while those arrangements create decontextualised forms of tourist spectacle.<sup>72</sup> However, although the Mandarin term *fengianji* may simplify the original meaning of the rituals, it is still a compromising method for a cosmopolitan group to build unity around.

In terms of convivial sociality, Overing and Passes (2000) indicate that the notion of conviviality among the Amazonian indigenous groups is different from the Western definition, that conviviality is not sometimes festive and intensive but rather normal, jovial and daily. Taiwanese urban indigenous groups' conviviality may be amidst the former and the latter, and such convivial sociality is more prominently demonstrated through drinking practices. By looking into everyday drinking practices of urban indigenous groups, I argue that drinking has become a symbolic practice of

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<sup>72</sup> See Amis activist Kulas Umo's critics: <https://www.facebook.com/被塑造的文化虛構的聯合豐年節/1485421751504017/> In his blog, he points out the analogy that to appropriate the notion of Chinese New Year to indigenous festivals is a colonialist perspective.

their nostalgia, which remains a function to carry out sociability and solidarity. Also, even if urban indigenous people are losing the external display of traditional ceremonies, they still create new forms of rituals, which present the liminal phase of the societies that shows the social equality and inclusion, in their everyday lives.



Figure 6. 16 I had dinner with some urban indigenous people in front of their houses. (Artistically modified photograph)

#### **6. 4 Orchid Island: From social suffering to a new normal**

The previous subchapters show indigenous people's changing drinking styles following the deprivation of their land rights and the economic growth that results in rapid population outflows from indigenous townships to urban areas. In this section, I continue to stress drinking practices as symbolic violence under the state's development policies by giving the example of Tao people's everyday life on Orchid Island. Among all indigenous ethnic groups in Taiwan, Tao is the only group without an alcohol making tradition but they nonetheless have a high prevalence of alcohol use and mental health problems. I visited Orchid Island as part of this multi-sited study to find a piece of the jigsaw puzzle that should not be missed in portraying indigenous drinking.

During my stay, I joined the local health centre's round visiting patients. Like other local health centres in indigenous townships, the medical teams went direct to

patients' homes to provide services such as basic consultation, blood pressure measurements, delivering medicines and some treatments. I followed Dr Chu, a Puyuma<sup>73</sup> doctor who received state-financed training and provides medical service at Orchid Island after graduation, for a grand tour of the island. I also randomly interviewed islanders to collect their life stories. Tourism has become one of the focuses of my observation since it has prevailed everyday practices and reshaped drinking styles on the island.

Orchid Island is where the Taiwanese government stored nuclear waste for decades and is currently developing its tourism despite the fact that it suffers from environmental pollution. In the past decade, due to the rapid growth of tourism the number of private accommodations such as B&Bs and hostels has increased to 300 on this island, which has an area of only 48.39 kilometres squared. The population has increased to 5165 people according to official statistical data. Motorcycles, B&Bs and tourist markets full of food stands, bars and souvenir shops have become the central units in the island's landscape. Due to the rapid growth of tourism, alcohol has become a symbolic commodity of the island. In recent years, drinking practices have become part of the islander's way of self-fashioning, which also reflects how the indigenous group reacts to the state's treatment of marginalisation and dispossession then and now.

#### **6.4.1 Tao: A people without a winemaking tradition**

It was mid-summer and the young villagers were preparing for the annual *tatala* race held by the Township Office as part of the government-led harvest festival.

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<sup>73</sup> Puyuma (Mandarin Chinese: 卑南族 Bēinán-zú), one of the indigenous groups of the Taiwanese indigenous ethnic groups. The Puyuma people are basically consisted of two subgroups, Chihpen and Nanwang groups, who both settle in Taitung County on the east coast of Taiwan.

Meanwhile other elder men sat on the *tagakal* drinking Paolyta and beer. According to *Ahehep no tao* (the Tao calendar), there are complicated rituals during *rayon*, the flying-fish season. Many water activities are not allowed during this period, except the traditional fishing activities and rituals. The *tatala* races are held after *rayon* and local people are encouraged to take part in order to promote and pass down the traditional culture. However, like other indigenous townships in Taiwan, local governments actually hold such united festivals in order to promote tourism.

Tao people have been considered one of the indigenous ethnic groups to show a notable increase in alcoholic intoxication cases in recent decades (Hwu 1993). Epidemiologists have tried to explain that Tao people who are less educated, unmarried and stay on the mainland have a higher risk for alcohol use disorders (Liu and Cheng 1998). Like other indigenous townships, public sectors continuously carry out health interventions for alcoholism but obtain poor outcomes.



Figure 6. 17 The map of Orchid Island (Lanyu) and the sites that visited by the author.

Japanese anthropologists indicate that Tao is an indigenous group who do not have or have lost a wine making tradition (Ryuzo 1996; Tsuchida 1997). From the 1960s, Tao people started to have frequent interaction with Taiwan mainlanders. This implies that Tao people obtained alcohol use from the outsiders. Before being governed by colonisers, Tao people had close connections to Ivatans who live on the Batanes of the Philippines. Tsuchida (ibid.) indicates that there is a word *parek* in Tao



language that is very similar to the Ivatans' *palek* which means wine. Tao people may have had wine-making skills a century ago but lost it due to losing connection with Batanes during the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries.

During my stay on the island, I had several conversations with local people who ran tourism businesses. Ader, a local man in his 40s, was running an ice stand in *Jiraralay* (Langdao in Chinese Mandarin). Before returning to the island, he worked as a labourer in Hsinchu, Taiwan:

*'Our mission was to paint the incinerator plant in Nanliao, Hsinchu. We lived in temporary accommodation. We (indigenous workers) used to drink together. I learned how to drink and smoke during that time. I am the oldest son of my parents. Since my parents' health has been getting worse, I decided to come back to Orchid Island.'*

Ader's experience of migration is a typical story for middle-aged Tao people. His life in Hsinchu was the same as the aforementioned ways of living in urban indigenous communities. After coming back to the island, Ader started to run an ice stand and '*tatala* trial' business, while his wife began a grilled flying fish stand nearby.



Figure 6. 18 Ader ferrying tourists with his *tatala*. (Artistically modified photograph)

Tsai (2007) uses the concept of ‘social suffering’ (Kleinman 1995; Kleinman, Das, and Lock 1997) to point out that the high prevalence of mental disorders among the Tao is related to their frustrating collective experience of migration that results in physical and psychological trauma, which is also a result of modernisation. To dispute the genetic theory of indigenous people’s alcoholism, Tsai (2008) stresses the social change that causes the anomie of self-identity.

Tao people lost traditional living skills under colonial education. Furthermore, they are forced to live in a broader market economy system thereafter being not capable of surviving on Orchid Island by simply adapting traditional lifestyle (Yu 2004). Since the 1980s, the economic growth of Taiwan’s mainland has facilitated the population outflow of the island. The establishment of the nuclear waste storage site has also had an enormous impact on the islanders’ lives.

In the past decade, tourism has been well developed on Orchid Island and has become its primary economic activity. Since 1946, Orchid Island has been governed under Lanyu Township of Taitung County. Currently, out of the total population of 5036, approximately 4200 belong to the indigenous Tao community, and the remainder are mainly Han Chinese. The annual population of tourists to the island has reached 100,000 people in recent years.<sup>74</sup> The two major groups who run tourist businesses are young Tao people who have returned from the mainland and the outlanders who have a connection with the island through marriage. There are busy ferry cruises between the mainland and Orchid Island every day, and the ferries carry tourists and supplies for the local shops. The B&B hosts come to the port to pick up their customers, and motorcycle rental businesses have occupied the area surrounding the port.

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<sup>74</sup> Tourist Statistics from Tourism Bureau, M.O.T.C. Taiwan:  
<https://admin.taiwan.net.tw/BusinessInfo/TouristStatistics>

The development of tourism is still controversial on Orchid Island and local attitudes are ambivalent. Although tourism provides economic benefits, there are adverse effects. For example, the island's intake of nearly 1400 tonnes of garbage in a year is problematic, and its landfill site is almost full. This has triggered the islanders to launch a campaign to recycle waste. Another problem is safety. Since there is a loose prohibition on drunk driving, traffic accidents have increased and even cause deaths of tourists and local people. Moreover, tourists may break the local folk norms, such as disrespectfully touching the *tatala*, taking photos, breaking into the limited territorial waters during the festival season or making noise during funerals.

The ocean is the centre of Tao people's spatial perception and mental map (Syaman Lamuran and Tibusungu 'e Vayayana 2016). However, people live at greater distance from the sea now. Orchid Island is an ageing society since many young villagers have gone to the mainland in search of education and jobs. Some people make use of their houses as accommodation for tourists. The young population has been substituted by tourists and other young people on short stays for working holidays. The older people, whether gathered or alone, often drink under the roofs of the traditional pavilion buildings, *tagakal*, where men and women used to observe the ocean and made plans for daily routines (Figure 6. 19). What they drink varies from rice wine to Paolyta-B and hand-mixed cocktails. Owing to the decline of agriculture and fisheries, old people suffer from declining physical health and muscle atrophy because of the lack of physical activity.

Alcohol was brought into the island as a kind of everyday commodity. Similar to other indigenous groups, Tao people mix alcoholic drinks with different beverages such as milk, tea and energy drinks. The most popular drinks for elderly people are Paolyta and *Mikanong* (米咖農), a three-in-one drink as a mixer of *Mi jiu* (rice wine),

*Ka fei* (coffee) and *Guo Nong* (milk).<sup>75</sup> The reason for mixing them is to dilute the spicy taste of rice wine and add sweetness. These mixes have encouraged people to drink continuously and many find it hard to stop.

Unsurprisingly, there were continuous psychoeducation sessions to encourage people to cut down on their drinking, carried out under the auspices of the government's projects, though as in Wufeng such interventions have lacked validity. The villagers of Orchid Island understand the hazardous effect of alcohol and recognise certain people exhibiting inappropriate drinking behaviours within their circles, for which life stress, traumatic experiences or frustration are the most reported reasons. However, the islanders do not consider it the most critical health issue.



Figure 6. 19 The older people drink under the roof of *tagakal*.

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<sup>75</sup> The coffee and milk used to make *Mikanong* are specific brands of canned coffee and milk, 'Mr Brown Coffee' and 'Guo Noing Milk'. They are cheap and easily preserved, so they have become very popular and widely available in indigenous communities.

#### 6.4.2 Incongruent demands for health

*When I tried to speak, a woman raised her hand and asked, 'Isn't that the alcohol made by the Taiwan government and sold everywhere? It was even carried here by ships and aeroplanes and sold to us Tao people at a very high price. Say, are you doctors sent by the Taiwan government? You ask us not to drink alcohol made by yourself, isn't that ridiculous?'*

*To resolve the embarrassing situation, I suggested changing the topic, asking them to indicate the urgent issues that need to be discussed.*

*'Can we talk about the national park?'*

*'Can we ask you, Dr Tien, to talk about how nuclear waste, which is even more horrible than alcohol, causes damage to our health?'*

*'Many diseases were brought here by tourists. We should give health education sessions to the tourists.'*

Tuobasi Tamapima (1998:183-185), *Essays on Medical Practice in Lanyu*

This dialogue was extracted from a book written by Tuobasi Tamapima, a Bunun doctor who worked on Orchid Island. The conversation between the islanders and the doctor reflects contradictory ideas about the concept of health. While I followed the public health centre's 'grand round' of home visits, the local medical team stopped at a grocery store in Yeyin to measure the blood pressure of several women. The house was full of laughter; the tipsy women had just finished a dozen beers while playing cards. The nurse passed on the last pile of pain relief patches to them. Like the healthcare practices that I took part in in indigenous villages elsewhere, medical care may only focus on relieving physical pain rather than encouraging healthier lifestyles.

Unsurprisingly, the medical team simply neglects the drinks on the table. There seems to be a tacit consent between both healthcare givers and receivers that drinking is no big deal. However, it does not mean the islanders do not know the hazardous effects of alcohol. This is what I term ‘incongruent demands for health’.

When talking with the local people, I found that most of the islanders can share at least one or two cases of problematic drinking within their families or friends, although it appears to be paradoxical when I stress the social norm. This is similar to sociologist Tsai Yu-Yueh’s (2007) fieldwork experience that she found in any *zipos*, meaning the clan of Tao people, that there must be cases of suicide, alcoholism, mental illness or death by accident. Knowing that I was there to research alcohol, my homestay host Syaman immediately told me the story of his uncle, a drunk with disorganised speech who walks around all the time without falling down. Syaman’s wife, Sinan, also shared the story of her brother, who had once quit drinking after being diagnosed with oral cancer but started to drink again when he met a woman who drank: ‘He wants to stop her from drinking too much so he drinks for her.’ Syaman said ‘You should do some research on their body to see why they drink that much.’ However, they would still make the point that ‘We Tao people did not drink before!’ These reactions reveal a collective sentiment that is conflicted because the sensitivity of the stigma of alcohol is balanced with the acceptance that it is an issue.

Tao people have been forced to stand at the frontline of anti-nuclear campaigns. Pro-nuclear groups criticise Tao people as only protesting for the government’s compensation money.<sup>76</sup> Rumors like ‘Tao people do not know how to save electricity because they leave the light on all day long’ or ‘Tao people just drink without doing

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<sup>76</sup> Compensation money is one of the government’s measures to address the detrimental effects of the nuclear power plant development on local people’s living conditions. For example, when the north coast of Gongliao District in New Taipei City was chosen as the construction site for the 4<sup>th</sup> Nuclear Power Plant in Taiwan, the Taiwan Power Company gave compensation money to Gongliao people for the loss of their fishery rights.

anything' have reinforced the stigma. Tao people do not like the name that tourists have given to *tagakal*, '*fa-dai-ting*' (Mandarin Chinese 發呆亭), which means the pavilion for 'zoning out'. Syaman, indignant, said 'They say we are lazy. They even say we leave the conditioners on 24 hours day.'

Tao people believe that *Anito*, which is transformed from dead people's spirits, is contagious in Tao people's cosmology. Since *Anito* would miss its homeland, it would look for the spirits of relatives to accompany it. That is how people get ill and diseased. Tao people call the human spirit *pahad*. Being ill is the state of struggling when *pahad* is captured by *Anito*. One may die if his or her *pahad* is taken away by *Anito*. Tao people interpret ageing, illness and death through the lenses of the *Anito* belief, which has led to difficulties in providing home care (Liu 2004; Baines et al. 2019). In Tao's animism, '*anito*' is an evil spirit, which has been something of a barrier to Tao people accepting modern scientific explanations of diseases (Li 1960; Wei and Liu 1962).

However, Li (1960) wrote that the belief in *anito* would relieve the anxiety of not understanding misfortune, or consolidating the islanders' social values. Li's viewpoint may be verified in the islanders' anti-nuclear discourse. Since Tao people believe that *Anito* will bring misfortune to other Tao people who offend the taboos related to the morals of human relationships and human-land relationships (Chang 2017), they successfully call for solidarity by linking the meaning of nuclear waste to *Anito*.

Tao people are more fearful of chronic disease caused by nuclear waste than by alcohol. To understand how exactly the nuclear waste has affected Tao people, the government promised islanders they would carry out a large-scale health examination. In 2012, a government-led epidemiological research project ('The pioneer epidemiological research project of the evaluations on the low-level radioactive waste

on long term health and safety' (「蘭嶼低階核廢料對居民長期健康與安全評估及健康流行病學調查先驅研究計畫」) was launched at the islanders' demand. However, since the project could not meet the requirements of strict regulations over informed consent processes, the project ceased in 2017,<sup>77</sup> disappointing Tao people. Finding scientific evidence of the disadvantages of nuclear waste has become the islanders' major demand for health.

However, paradoxically, the islanders do not take chronic diseases too seriously, although disease is interpreted as *Anito*. Maybe a better explanation is that chronic diseases, mental disorders (including alcohol induced) and deaths are *Anito* themselves, rather than being affected by *Anito*. Tao people do not drive out *Anito* by medical practices but rather keep distance from *Anito*. Funk (2014) writes about the reason why Tao elderly people are so isolated: 'when death is imminent, fear and avoidance behavior gain prevalence over feelings of love and affection, and respect toward the elderly is expressed in an extreme form social distancing.' One of my fieldnotes, describing a man's death, clarifies this further:

On the day I visited Dongqing, the market was not as busy as usual. The street vendors were closed and the roadsides were lined with rope to keep people from approaching the sea. *Tatala* were all pulled onto the beach (Figure 6. 20). The streets were empty and quiet; old men sat in the *tagakal*, facing the sea silently. A few men dressed in traditional armour passed by and walked toward a house, holding spears in their hands.

Local people told me a man was dead. Those armed men were heading to the house of the bereaved family. The market would be closed for three days.

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<sup>77</sup> See the article 'Health Examinations for Orchid Island residents delayed. The Control Yuan corrected the Ministry of Health and Welfare' (蘭嶼居民健檢延宕 衛福部遭監院糾正) <https://www.cna.com.tw/news/aip/201901030320.aspx> (Search Date: 10th August 2019)



According to Tao customs, the dead person should be buried on the day they die. The male relatives would be fully armed and gather in the house of the deceased, shouting and waving weapons to drive away the evil spirit, which Tao people call '*anito*'. Everyone was worrying they would be the next to die.

(Fieldnote, 27<sup>th</sup> July, 2018)

During my stay on Orchid Island, a petition had just been launched to build a new Hospital. In 2018, an air ambulance helicopter crashed while carrying an 81-year-old man who had been choked, killing six people: the patient, one of his relatives, the nurse and the two pilots. This accident then triggered the demand for a new hospital on the island, since the islanders claimed that it is not enough only to have a medical evacuation system. The petition even opened for tourists to sign, but local government replied that it was impractical due to a lack of human and material resources.

According to local medical practitioners, what they manage the most is physically perceptible pain and visible injuries and, sometimes, prescriptions for pain relief are overused. However, chronic illness cannot be relieved by medical practices and people who have been suffering from chronic illness may be isolated. In 2017, a Christian nurse devoted to breaking the myth of *Anito* established the first home care centre, but it always faced financial distress due to a lack of support.

Situated at the margins of state development, Tao people have borne the detrimental impacts of this development on their living environment, culture and health. Drinking is a reflection of social suffering, but Tao people's alcohol use and related health problems and their incongruent demands for healthcare resources once

again reveal the collective, conflicting sentiments of blame and trustworthiness toward the state's governance.

Scholars adapt Kleinman's (1981) call to understand patients' cultural context and apply 'cultural healing' or 'cultural care' to indigenous people (Tsai 2008; Ru 2015). However, the practicability may raise a question since cultural practices are also altered as time goes on and more linked to the development of tourism. When I followed home visits with the medical team, a scene reminded me to ask this: to what degree should we bend the arc regarding cultural practices? Around ten adolescents gathered on the *tagakal* in front of a grocery store, looking at their mobile phones. It soon occurred to me that, when I was in Wufeng, the American priest of Qingquan Catholic Church told me 'now the indigenous young people are having less addiction to alcohol but to the mobile phones.' Then I saw similar scenes on Orchid Island: some of the Tao boys raised their heads and thanked the medical team, before turning back to their devices. Young Tao people no longer watch the ocean on the *tagakal* to make sailing plans. They might stare at their smartphone and chat through social networking apps. Some *tagakal* have even become places for social drinks where local people express their hospitality to tourists. Tourism has improved the Tao people's material conditions, but also thoroughly changed their way of life.



Figure 6. 20 Tatala on the beach of Orchid Island.

#### 6.4.5 Anti-Nuclear Bar: Exploiting Drinking Stereotypes

During the visit to Orchid Island, an Anti-Nuclear Bar caught my attention. This bar is not only a place for a drink but also a hub to organise local people. The Anti-Nuclear Bar is a perfect example of transforming the stigma to agencies of social movements by exploiting drinking stereotypes. The bar reminded me of a photo shared by a sociologist friend, showing Atayal youth from Nan'ao Township demonstrating their anti-nuclear claims by putting bottles of Paolyta-B beside their pun slogan: '*zhi yao he, bu yao he*' (只要喝, 不要核). The former '*he*' means 'drink', while the latter is 'nuclear' (Figure 6. 21). Besides Tao people, Atayal people are also facing threats from the nuclear waste. Since Nan'ao Township in Yilan County has been chosen as one of the possible locations of a permanent nuclear waste disposal site, local youths have organised to protest against the government's proposal and taken part in the anti-nuclear rallies in Taipei every year. These self-labelling gestures help explain the meaning of the drinking practices, which in this case reflect

embodied resistance to the state's governance. Such labelling practices to exploit drinking stereotypes as resistance can be seen on Orchid Island.



Figure 6. 21 Left: The anti-nuclear slogan, ‘zhi yao he, bu yao he’ (Photo: Chia-ling Wu). Right: Nan’ao Atayal youths join the anti-nuclear rally in Taipei, 2018.

About a half mile from the Dongqing Village market in Orchid Island, a bar with a petroleum barrel painted in yellow like nuclear waste storage caught my attention (Figure 6. 22). During the three years following the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster in Japan in 2011, the voices of anti-nuclear protesters grew louder and local anti-nuclear activities also bloomed throughout Taiwan. In 2012, a few young islanders established ‘The Lanyu Youth Action Alliance’ (蘭嶼青年行動聯盟). The Anti-Nuclear Bar, also established in 2012, has become one of the most recognisable anti-nuclear symbols on Orchid Island. The bar opened as a local hub for activists and tourists to be connected and empowered through various events, such as workshops and concerts. On the walls of the bar were black and white photos showing the long history of anti-nuclear movements on the island. While chatting inside the bar, I mentioned the Paolyta bottles that Atayal people brought to the rallies held in Taipei a few years ago. A woman whose family was also devoted to the anti-nuclear movement told me, ‘Our elders brought Paolyta onto the street as well. Maybe they used it to drown their fears.’



Figure 6. 22 Anti-nuclear bar. A petroleum barrel painted in yellow like nuclear waste storage.



Figure 6. 23 Customers of the Anti-Nuclear Bar pose to represent the slogan ‘I am human, I am anti-nuclear’. (Photo retrieved on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2019 from Anti-nuclear Bar Facebook page)

Customers of the bar have to pose to mimic the Chinese word ‘*ren*’ (人) which means ‘human being’, representing the popular slogan ‘I am human, I am anti-nuclear’, used by anti-nuclear NGOs (Figure 6. 23). The bar also launched its signature cocktail, the recipe for which is below:

### *The Radiation Special Blend*

#### *Ingredients:*

*Rice wine*

*Black coffee (bitter taste)*

*Sugar (a sweet coating, just like compensation money)*

*Preparation: Burn the sugar with burning charcoal which represents passion for the anti-nuclear movement. After inhaling the mixed smell, drink the wine together with complicated feelings. (Figure 6. 24)*

The shop owner explained to me that they use rice wine on purpose, not only because rice wine is a common alcohol used by indigenous people, but many people use their compensation money to buy rice wine. The compensation money has raised debates within local communities because some people see the money as bribery from the government. Likewise, the debates over compensation money for Orchid Island have never stopped. In 2019, according to the investigation report for the transitional justice of the management of nuclear waste, the Taiwanese government admitted the mistake of building the nuclear waste storage plant at Orchid Island without gaining the Tao people's approval and promised to give them compensation money for the loss of their land use rights. This amounted to 2.55 billion NT dollars. However, some Tao people did not agree with the money, claiming that the government should move the nuclear waste storage site off Orchid Island. The cocktail recipe thus has certain symbolic ingredients that refer to local people's complex feelings regarding compensation money.





Figure 6. 24 A visitor tasting the Radiation Special Blend cocktail. (Photo retrieved on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2019 from Anti-nuclear Bar Facebook page)

#### **6.4.6 Drinking: A New Normal**

As well as limited living resources, changing economic structures due to some newly established tourist businesses have also affected drinking practices in Tao indigenous villages on Orchid Island. Drinking not only represents suffering but more or less becomes a sort of self-fashioning stereotype along with social change. Chambers (2000:99) argues that rapid industrial development has led to the development of modern tourism: in some cases, ‘communities involved in the tourist trade knowingly exploit stereotypes of themselves in order to attract tourists.’ Exploiting drinking stereotypes is typical in Taiwanese indigenous communities and, given its lack of traditional drinking culture, Orchid Island is a particularly notable case of that.

The development of tourism in Orchid Island mirrors the development of mainland Taiwan. Part of this was because the economic growth of mainland Taiwan attracted manpower that resulted in a population outflow. The unequal development also resulted in a decline in agriculture in Orchid Island. Some local people claim that the more critical reason was the construction of the nuclear waste storage facility. Longmen Port, used to import this waste, has had a considerable impact on the island's environment. According to them, the time needed to harvest the water taro has increased from one year to three years in recent decades.

The booming tourism has changed the landscape of Orchid Island. In order to accommodate large numbers of tourists, local B&Bs and bars depend on the human effort from the outsourced work. Work exchange has become the most popular way to obtain this help. Hosts recruit tourists to manage the shops and accommodation, mostly students on holiday or young people on gap years. They can live on the island for free but have to help the host to look after the customers. Such specific work exchange schemes are rooted and extended from the local concept of *kagagan*, which means traditional practices that incorporate home visitors into the exchange system of social resources (Wu 2012).

With the rapid growth of tourism, alcohol has become a symbolic commodity of the island. There are many local alcohol products and newly invented cocktails. Although Tao people planted millet before,<sup>78</sup> as mentioned above they have no winemaking tradition. However, local people are now selling the '*Lanyu xiaomijiou*' (Orchid Island millet wine) to tourists and an informant told me that a pastor's wife

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<sup>78</sup> According to an elder's oral history, 'We Tao people, on our island here, millet culture has a very important for us. We say that millet is "avat no inaoan" which means "something prepared to save a life."' (Retrieved from Digital Archiving Yami Documentation: [http://yamiproject.cs.pu.edu.tw/yami/yami\\_ch/corpus/corpus\\_021-7.htm](http://yamiproject.cs.pu.edu.tw/yami/yami_ch/corpus/corpus_021-7.htm))



from another ethnic group taught the local people to make it (Figure 6. 25). A local young man who calls himself ‘*Jiugui the Boss*’(*jiugui*: 酒鬼 alcohol ghost) even launched his own brand of craft beer, ‘Water of the People’ (Figure 6. 26), and sells his products at ‘the green meadow’, a popular tourist attraction on the island. The bars and B&Bs have launched several kinds of cocktails that represent Orchid Island’s specific characteristics. Many of the local bars are owned by cross-ethnic marriage couples, such as a Tao wife and a Han Chinese husband. Some add rice wine and milk to coffee to mimic *Mikanong* (see Chapter 6.4.4), like local elders mix rice wine and coffee (Figure 6. 26). Here are some other examples:

*I Come from Lanyu: Lychee Liqueurs, Rum; the gradient colours of red and blue symbolises Tao’s culture of enthusiasm and the sea.*

*Tao girls: Local Millet Wine, Roselle Flower; the pink wine is just like a beautiful Tao girl.*

*Let’s Go to Seaside: Local Millet Wine, Vodka, and Peach Juice: to create the sea like flavor.*



Figure 6. 25 A food stand selling *Lanyu Xiaomijiou* (Orchid Island millet wine)



Figure 6. 26 Left: Rice wine coffee. Right: craft beer, 'Water of the People'.

Because of the booming B&Bs and bars, there are lots of travel tips provided by travel blogs and media, which are full of advice that includes 'must try cocktails' or 'drink on the tagakal'. In fact, Tao people are not unaware of the stigma of alcohol, but they try hard to neutralise drinking practices as a common practice without negative moral values. They set up online social media such as Facebook pages or Instagram accounts with hashtags stressing the meaning of happiness and friendship, or even emphasising the health benefits of drinking. They openly dispute the saying that drinking is suffering, like what was posted by a B&B owner when he quoted the scholars' arguments: 'How can they say drinking is a way of venting? It makes people to think about bad things. Drinking is for happiness!' Moreover, the helpers also contribute their own ideas to promote Tao culture; sometimes drinking is a selling point. This specific reciprocal labour exchange reshapes the exchange economy and creates a 'new normal' in Orchid Island drinking culture.

## 6.5 Conclusion

*Isn't it that homesickness emerges after a farewell?*

*I'm still standing on the land of my home,*

*Why do I writhe in my heart without a reason?*

*Just because my father always told me,*

*This land used to belong to us.*

Pau-Dull (Jian-nian Chen),

*Home sick* from the music album *Ho-hai-yan, Ocean*

Taiwanese indigenous people experienced a tremendous life change through colonisation and development during the Cold War. The party-capitalism regime should take account for indigenous people losing their lands and other basic rights. In brief, the modern history of Taiwanese indigenous people is a history of dispossession. The song from the award-winning album written by Pau-Dull,<sup>79</sup> an indigenous singer-songwriter of the Puyuma *Buluo*, precisely describes the replacement of the ownership of the land that causes indigenous people's suffering from homesickness. This chapter has highlighted the structural violence and its diasporic consequences, geographical, spatial and spiritual. For urban indigenous labourers, drinking represents their collective destiny, which I call an intoxicated diaspora that shows the embodiment of suffering from exile from their homelands. For those who have not left their homeland, their living space has been occupied and/or dumped on by outsiders including the state.

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<sup>79</sup> Pau-Dull (Jian-nian Chen) is a retired police officer and a singer-songwriter-artist of the Puyuma tribe. His first album, 'Ho-Hai-Yan Ocean,' was released in 1999 and the next year was awarded a Golden Melody Award, the most honoured prize for musicians of popular music in Taiwan. Before his retirement, Pau-Dull served as a police officer in Lanyu (Orchid Island), home to Tao people.

The development in Taiwan during the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was based on the KMT's principle of doing better than communist China after losing the civil war. In this process indigenous people have been deprived of their living resources which have become part of the government's capital in the interests of national defence. The KMT government named Taiwan '*Fuxing Jidi*' (復興基地, the Base for the Revival) as a base for anti-communist restoration in the Chinese mainland. During KMT governance, part of traditional indigenous territory was occupied by the Ministry of Defence and built into military camps. At the same time, trees in the mountain were used as building materials for military barracks. Moreover, industrial development has widened the urban-rural gap, and this imbalanced development is still ongoing.

In this chapter, the juxtaposed examples of drinking practices in both urban and rural areas show drinking as a result of the state's oppression and dispossession. However, drinking styles that emerged from societal change may also highlight the tendency to invent new forms of indigeneity. Part of the invention is firmly related to the booming tourism. Drinking practices may be seen as symbolic violence that represents the oppression of a colonial power. However, there is still a risk of victimising those who drink and overstressing the jeopardy brought by alcohol while neglecting certain positive meanings of it. The question we may need to ask is do drinking practices lose indigeneity? What senses and values can be shared both in the traditional rituals and karaoke on the urban riverside? What about those alcoholic drinks that are deliberately shown to outsiders?

We have seen in the case of Orchid Island how *Mikanong* has become popular around indigenous communities and well known among tourists, echoing MacCarthy's statement (2016:217) that 'culture, authenticity, and primitivity are

utilized as tropes employed to contextualize alterity and make sense of cultural Others'. Chambers (2000) also quotes Hobsbawm and Ranger's (1983) invented traditions, suggesting such inventions are related to agency. Such intentionality introduces the theme of the next chapter. Indigenous people may have experienced displacement of their bodies and culture; however, they are still struggling to fight for their rights in order to emplace themselves back on their land. In the next chapter, I move the gaze from that of vulnerability to resilience, thus echoing my informants' advice to 'write it conversely'.

## **7. Fighting to Live Sober**

This chapter discusses indigenous people's resilience. In previous chapters, I describe indigenous people's current situations of discrimination, marginalisation and dispossession, which results in the dilemma of applying health narratives to alcohol use. Pathologisation appears to be equivocal. It is difficult to find a balance between pointing out problematic drinking and reinforcing the stigma of alcohol use, which makes problematising drinking practices a questionable practice in itself.

Neither the discourse of victimisation nor a pathologisation of drinking behaviour properly describes indigenous people's current situation. In a context where they are searching for rights, we need another perspective on their drinking practices.

I use the notion of ‘sobriety’ in its symbolic meaning to define these everyday resistances. It is a sensitive way of highlighting drinking issues among indigenous groups caused by the stigmatisation effect. It is also problematic to de-stigmatise drinking by adapting medical narratives. In fact, by looking at indigenous people’s everyday practices, we realise that they do not deliberately trivialise health issues. However, they are unwilling to be externally defined as a particular kind of people (e.g. people who drink) since they have been continuously labelled as such by the governments of colonialism and settler-colonialism for many years.

Efforts made by indigenous people to distance themselves from these labels could be linked to what I call ‘symbolic sobriety’. The sobriety implied here does not refer to a neuropsychological reality but a symbolic one. Symbolic sobriety applies to indigenous people’s collective awareness of how alcohol has affected their lives, though they have ways of mitigating certain disadvantages. Most of these practices have bypassed the health narratives regarding drinking issues. Sometimes, however, they even show subtle resistance to the health narratives by challenging the stereotype of alcohol use, either on an individual or collective level.

In contrast to how health narratives often stigmatise indigenous people as irresponsible and careless, I argue that these groups have a high level of self-awareness. This sobriety is more than abstinence; it is to be thoughtful, solemn, spontaneous and sometimes even fun-loving, demonstrating a will of resistance. I set out to give a picture of indigenous people’s gestures in search of sobriety by the scaling-out approach to different indigenous communities and organisations. It is not an all-inclusive ethnogeographic note but still recapitulates indigenous people’s life trajectories on the move and contemporary life situations of ethnopolitical-environmental vulnerability.

## 7.1 Aboriginal Victory Association

### 7.1.1 ‘I’m indigenous, and I don’t drink’

On the County Highway 122 that connects Chutung City and Wufeng Township, a black van printed in bold with the Aboriginal Victory Association (台灣原住民戒酒得勝關懷協會) carries AVA ‘Brothers’<sup>80</sup> (they use ‘*di xiong*’ in Mandarin Chinese) between Taoyaun and Hsinchu every weekend. It is somewhat mysterious for Wufeng people since the association does not have regular communication with the local communities ordinarily.

One day, an anthropologist friend put a picture on social media of a sticker on the back of a car in Hualien (a county in Eastern Taiwan) which read ‘I’m indigenous, and I don’t drink’ (Figure 7. 1). I was struck by the way indigenous people deal with such a stereotype of drinking. It is difficult to tell whether it is an effort to negate the stereotype or attach themselves to it. After some Googling I realised the sticker was released by the AVA, which had set up a farm on a remote mountain in Wufeng, providing a place for indigenous people to get away from alcohol.

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<sup>80</sup> I use a capital B here to highlight the specific meaning of the Chinese phrase ‘*di xiong*’ (弟兄). In Chinese, brother is ‘*xiong di*’ (兄弟). However, Chinese-speaking Christians may use reverse wording to express brotherhood without blood relation. Also, ‘*di xiong*’ may refer to comrades-in-arms, which also implies masculinity.



Figure 7. 1 A sticker on the back of a van saying 'I'm indigenous, and I don't drink'.

The Aboriginal Victory Association (AVA) is an independent non-profit organisation set up by a group of Christians in 2007. The association's registered address is in Pingzhen District, Taoyuan City, where an industrial park was founded that has attracted many migrant indigenous labourers since 1973. In 2010, the AVA set up a farm in Wufeng to provide indigenous people from all around Taiwan a place to quit alcohol. The farm is located deep in the mountains in a remote forest. On my first visit to the AVA, Priest Sha, a former drinker and worker, led me to the farm, for which there were no signposts. According to Priest Sha, the farm was set up in a remote area on purpose in order to keep the members away from drink, since there are too many grocery stores in the tribal areas.

The AVA has a close relationship with the Hakka churches. When I first visited, some of the members wore the T-shirts of a Hakka seminary. It is generally known that there is a close relationship between indigenous and Hakka people because of their geographic background, since both of them have settled in mountain areas for hundreds of years. However, that relationship relates to another narrative which in turn relates to the history of industrial development in Taiwan. Take Pingzhen for example. Pingzhen was formerly established as Changluliao during the Qing Dynasty. Pingzhen District is one of the industrial developed zones established along with the



development of skill-intensive and high-technology industry after the 1970s. During that time, in order to maintain the competitiveness of exports, the government encouraged the development of manufacturing, IT and electronics industries.

However, after the mid 1970s, during the period of the significant appreciation of the Taiwan dollar, and along with the rise of environmental awareness, it was hard to find land to build factories in urban areas. Thus, some of the suburban areas, which originally were Hakka villages, like Chungli, Pingzhen and Kuanyin, were developed into industrial districts in Taoyuan City, where 785,000 Hakka residents live. These newly established industries then attracted a number of indigenous people who originally settled in Eastern Taiwan. According to the official data, there are almost 80,000 indigenous people living in Taoyuan City, including more than 60,000 urban indigenous residents. The key person in the founding of the AVA, Pastor Ming-Hsin Wang, was an immigrant worker who left his hometown in Eastern Taiwan and settled down in Pingzhen.

Ming-Hsin Wang, a Bunun<sup>81</sup> former worker in Pingzhen District and former alcoholic, met a Hakka Pastor, Yong-Sheng Wen, who worked in a church in Pingzhen and became the president of the Hakka seminary. Wang was encouraged by Pastor Wen to enter the Hakka seminary, and then finally became a priest to help his people.

Pastor Wang left his homeland when he was young and, after buying a house, got into debt. Under such financial burdens, he had to hold more than one job which made life more stressful and his loneliness resulted in him having an affair with another woman. His arm was mangled in machinery and nearly broken. He almost lost

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<sup>81</sup> Bunun are a Taiwanese indigenous ethnic people who were known as brave hunters, and are currently best known for their polyphonic vocal music, an eight-part polyphony: *Pasibutbut*. The Bunun are widely distributed across the central mountainous areas of Taiwan.

everything, but he went through every hardship on the strength of his faith and God's grace and passed away in 2016. Wang's story has become a testimony of the AVA that inspires more people to join in, since his life experience is so much like so many other urban indigenous people's life histories.

Currently, the lynchpin of the association is Priest Sha, a veteran and former drinker. Many of the other staff come from the same family, and also still work in the factories. But it is not easy to raise funding in indigenous churches, since many of the key people in these churches have a drinking habit. Priest Sha told me:

*'Once we met a group of young men, drinking and chatting together. I told them, "I'm indigenous and I don't drink." They felt embarrassed. They might think that drinking is kind of "decoration" of our lives, that life would be boring without drinking. Nowadays, some churches are also proposing our traditional ceremonies. Churches play key roles in a community, and the indigenous ethnicities have their own customs. Churches are facing pressure in this case.'*

The AVA's mission is clear: to help indigenous people quit drinking. However, its missionaries are not merely limited to Taiwan. It has a strong partnership with Hakka churches, and has even built a relationship with the Hakka church in Sabah, Malaysia. In recent years, they have sent short-term missionaries to Malaysia annually, since they found that the indigenous people there have very similar drinking problems.

### **7.1.2 The 'adulterated wine' event**

*'At the beginning, Pastor Wang had not become a priest yet, he just used very simple Scripture verses to share his vision. But in 2002, there was a major event:*

*the adulterated wine. During that year, in many places where indigenous people settled down, the adulterated wine event made our people wary. Many people died because of this, although the problem of alcoholism had been very common before that. But Pastor Wang had just graduated from the Hakka seminary, and because of the adulterated wine, there was the start of the AVA.'*

(Priest Sha)

The so-called adulterated wine is 'denatured alcohol' (ethanol unfit for human consumption) mixed with 'real' alcohol in order to reduce the cost of production. The adulterated wine tragedy in 2002 is one of the major food safety scandals in Taiwan's history. According to the press, the number of deaths varied from around ten to dozens. Some argue that those who died after drinking it might have had their own underlying diseases. Another problem was the difficulty of postmortem autopsy, since some families of the deceased wanted to keep a low profile. Furthermore, the official statistical data could not show the exact number since those numbers were diluted in the number of accidents, whatever the causes were. However, one thing was certainly a determinant, an external factor: the price of rice wine was raised from 20 NTD to 185 NTD in 2002, which meant adulterated wine became highly prevalent.

What made the price of rice wine soar so dramatically? 2002 was the year that the Tobacco and Alcohol Tax Act was introduced. The new policy was established as a condition of Taiwan's WTO accession. After negotiation with the WTO countries, in 1998 Taiwan terminated the state's monopoly system for tobacco and alcohol sales. However, in 2000 a panic-buying spree began right after the Tobacco and Alcohol Tax Act was passed in Legislative Yuan, as Taiwanese people anticipated a rise in the price of rice wine. Thus, adulterated wine became readily available.

### 7.1.3 Daily routines in AVA

People who came to AVA would stay at least one and a half years without paying any money. Their mobile phones were handed in and kept in a safe place, which meant that there was no individual connection to the external world. The daily routine of the AVA farm is just like a military camp of the Republic of China Armed Forces. It is all male and they call each other Brothers, just as in Christian churches. The Brothers assemble together in the field for the ceremony of raising the national flag in the early morning and call out 'Hallelujah!' loudly toward the sky (Figure 7. 2).

Every Thursday they have a Prayer-walk along the paths in the mountain. They blow a *shofar*,<sup>82</sup> emulating Joshua in the battle of Jericho after marching on the mountain (Figure 7. 3). After the assembly, they work separately in the farm. There are fruit orchards, vegetable gardens, a mushroom greenhouse and a chicken farm. They take turns preparing the food and in leading grace. They sit at square tables to eat their meals. In the afternoon, they have a nap followed by Bible reading class and prayer sessions. During weekends, they get in a van and go to a church in Pingzhen together. Sometimes, they go to other churches all around Taiwan to share their testimonies, and also ask for donations.

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<sup>82</sup> A *shofar* is an ancient musical horn typically made and used for Jewish religious purposes. It is popular in some of the evangelical churches in Taiwan.



Figure 7. 2 AVA Brothers say ‘Hallelujah!’ loudly toward the sky.



Figure 7. 3 An AVA Brother blows a shofar.

#### 7.1.4 All we can do is pray

One day when I stayed in the farm of AVA, I was invited to give a talk. I realised it was pointless for me to give a talk telling everybody my psychiatric knowledge about alcohol use, but it gave me a chance to discover how the drinkers think of those health education sessions launched by various public sectors. These Brothers had a lot of experience attending those lessons. They spontaneously talked about their experience of taking part in *jiejiu* projects:

*'We all have taken the bonus,' one said.*

*'We only stop drinking before the Chief of Village's broadcasting' added another.*

*'Just the day before the blood test!'* (Everyone laughed)

When I asked them how many of them had ever taken part in the *jiejiuban*, all but two (who were not indigenous) raised their hands. On the day I arrived at the AVA, there was a newcomer from Ulay, an Atayal *buluo* not far from the farm. He had just been hospitalised to repair his hip fracture after falling down from drinking. I was told that he had burned his house down by accident due to being drunk a few months previously. He could hardly talk and walk because of his disorientation. When he tried to stand up to walk, some Brothers tried to support him, but were stopped by Priest Sha: 'He actually knows [how to walk]. Let him walk by himself. He can do that, don't worry.'

The physical situations differ among these Brothers. On Monday, Priest Sha took those with chronic diseases to the local hospitals in Chutung. Below are some quotations from Priest Sha:

*'They may be able to deal with the withdrawal symptoms, but we would ask the doctors to taper down the doses of the pills, and see if our Brothers can get rid of the medicine at last [...] Here we let them challenge themselves, by staying here they would get back to their normal emotion and pace of life. We don't have any special method for dealing with addiction. All we can do is pray.'* (Figure 7. 4)



Figure 7. 4 AVA Brothers pray in a corrugated metal house.

### 7.1.5 Life stories of AVA Brothers

There were 17 AVA Brothers in total, which was the maximum capacity of the farm. These Brothers came from different indigenous townships and all had previous experience of unsuccessfully attempting to quit alcohol. Since the *jiejiuban* projects have always been held up as the local public sectors' administrative achievement, many people, particularly those villagers whose relatives or friends worked in the local civil service, would join in to fulfill the requirements from the superior authority. But in AVA, they see themselves as 'playing real': some of them volunteered to come; some of them were referred by their family. Below are the life stories of three AVA Brothers I collected during my stay at the AVA. I prefer them to speak for themselves.

#### **Cirow, 48, Atayal**

*I lived in Fuxing District, Taoyuan. It was my second time coming to the farm. My hands are clumsy because of a systemic neurological problem. That is all*

*because of alcohol. The alcohol even causes me visual problems, I have blurred vision. This is my second relapse. I had my first abstinence in March 2014. Maybe I drank too much the previous night, and on the second day, I was about ready to leave for Smangus to do carpentry work, but I fainted. I was told that I acted like an epileptic seizure attack, screaming and shouting, and bumped my head. It was just like evil spirits in my body. After remission, I started to drink again.*

*It was when I was in primary school that I began drinking. The elder gave me empty bottles and asked me to buy rice wine in the grocery shops. I felt dizzy but also energetic at the same time. Eventually I became an alcoholic.*

*I start to work when I was 16 years old. We Atayal people are now more assimilated (to Han people) and have less traditional rituals or cultural practices. I worked as a deliveryman and a packer most of the time in the beginning and met some drivers and guards. Later I worked as a driver in a textile factory and met many indigenous drivers who had a drinking habit. Very many! Like people from Chingchuan, Taoshan villages in Wufeng, many of them have already passed away. They were the same age as me. Besides drinking, many of them used drugs. Some of them had driving licences to drive a lorry, and worked in the Port of Keelung, where they could get drugs easily.*

*After getting off work, I would drink together with friends. Actually some of them were Han people. We had Paolyta in the morning, that was indispensable. There was no penalty for drunk-driving at that time, nor strict rules about seat belts; you could even drive barechested. Sometimes I could ask the police officers 'Wanna drink?' and we didn't need a helmet to ride a motorcycle either. After working in Hsinchu for six years, I started work as a builder after coming back from the military service. What I did was bricklaying, painting and laying tiles.*



*I was a Catholic, but the church paid no attention to drinking. I am embarrassed since my son is now a committed Christian. He is now 28 years old, he said that only God can help me, then contacted the priest of the AVA. My son had a drinking problem before, too.*

*When I first arrived here, I couldn't see anything. I have a cataract and some problems with the optic nerve. I could only use my hand to touch. My son had once been punished with confinement due to drinking and violence toward seniors during his military service. Afterwards, he received a book from his friend. That was a Holy Bible. Thank God, God changed his life. He used alcohol, drugs, betel nuts and cigarettes. There were no words between father and son, just like strangers, he would only bypass me. But now, we embrace each other.*

*I have stayed here for eight months, and I only depend on God. My eyesight is getting better. I'm so happy. I can walk now, even though not very steadily. I can help other Brothers to do something. I'm confident that I still can work after going back. My sister in law asked me to help her in her coffee house. God will give me a chance. I have experienced 'The blind see and the lame walk.'*

**Mr Gu, 36, Bunun**

*I went out to work when I was thirteen years old. In the beginning, I worked in an auto lathe factory that produced automobile parts. I also worked as a builder. I had previously been a mason. We made the retaining walls with cement grouting. Sometimes we worked in a city, sometimes in the mountains. I also worked on a farm, planting vegetables for our indigenous boss. Our boss did not like us to drink, but we asked someone to go downstairs to buy drink, tied the bottles together, then pulled them up from the window.*

*Later I began to work in Lin Ban [in Mandarin Chinese, meaning a team of forestry workers]. Those who work with a sickle have mostly passed away, or have heavy legs now. Now we only do the planting. The Forestry Bureau cut down trees before, now they restore forests. They recruit workers in the villages. What our work really involved depends on what the boss ordered. Previously, we worked for a whole year. All we could do during the vacation was drink. Sometimes, we would have a week-long vacation after two months' work. Sometimes we would have two days off after half a month's work. We used the bamboo poles and canvas to build a block-house. Our boss would provide the materials; however, if the truck could not reach the place, we would carry them by ourselves. In the block-house, we seldom used the gas, preferring wood to keep the fire going.*

*Sometimes what we did all day was just weeding. We also planted trees. It depended on the Forestry Bureau's orders. They would give us the tree saplings. I have previously done this in Li Shan, Hualien, Big Snow Mountain, and even outlying islands, like Green Island [a small volcanic island in the Pacific Ocean around 20 miles off the eastern coast of Taiwan].*

*There were few bosses to oversee work in Li Shan.<sup>83</sup> The reclamations there had already exceeded the limited area, so we had to cut down those trees, even though they had only been growing for ten years. Once when I was cutting a tree with a saw there was an Atayal aiming a hunting rifle at me.*

*We drank when we were bored. After coming off duty, we would take a rest in the block-house. We would not chat with each other without drinking. We had fifteen people in a Ban [in Mandarin Chinese, the unit of a forestry workers team].*

*Most of them were Bunun, some were Paiwan, and there were some Amis. We*

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<sup>83</sup> Li Shan, 梨山, Peer Mountain, a famous area located in a highland climate region with an altitude of more than 2000 meters that attracts those setting up tea plantations and fruit orchards.

*talked to each other in Mandarin Chinese. We would drink while chatting and playing cards. When sang together when we were happy. 'You can tease me...', 'The first, no drinks; the second, no smoking...', those songs.<sup>84</sup> Sometimes our bosses would prepare drinks, most of them were rice wine. When we earned some money, we could even walk for 5 to 6 kilometres to buy drinks. When we were working in Big Snow Mountain, we said we were people from the Forestry Bureau while driving through the checkpoint, and they would let us pass. Then we could exchange drinks with cigarettes.*

*When I tried to quit drinking, people used to say, 'Don't fool me'; my friends always said, 'Don't pretend.' So, every time would start drinking again. Now, I have been here for a year. My aunt knew this place and she suggested that I come. Life is good enough here; the daily routines are regular. However, I don't like those indoor lessons, I like outdoor work better. After leaving here, my brother in law will find me a job in Pingzhen Industrial District.*

#### **Dahai, 44, Bunun**

*Before I came here, I was working in the Bunun Buluo. I was beaten by alcohol. My sister works in a local health centre. That was simple, you can have blood test every month. You would have a 2000 NTD bonus if you passed the test after half a year. I did not ask my sister which sector funded the project. I just took part in it since I thought that I could help my sister, and have money at the same time.*

*I am one of a minority who have high academic qualifications in the indigenous villages. Many people ask me, 'How could you become an alcoholic*

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<sup>84</sup> Mr Gu's spontaneous example was 'Role Models of Youth', the song that introduced Chapter 4.1.2 'I love you, Baimijiu'.

*since you read so many books?’ I used to stay in the home village before going to university. I went to a university in Taipei. There were still vigorous movements for indigenous rights, such as ‘Return Our Land Movement’, and ‘The Name Rectification Movement’. There were just a few indigenous students in Taipei, so we would get together easily. We had an organisation called Beiyuanhui, the predecessor of Beishanlian [in Mandarin Chinese, meaning The Northern-region Indigenous Student Society, 北區山地大專學生聯誼會]. Pastor Bai in Bunun Buluo led us to join those rallies.*

*I attended university in 1992. At that time the name of indigenous people had not been rectified,<sup>85</sup> nor were there any indigenous student clubs. I saw a poster asking ‘Shanbao’<sup>86</sup> to join, but realised that it was a mountain climbing club. Later on, I borrowed the contact list of the school and started to contact all the indigenous students, and founded the first indigenous society in our school. We often took part in the meeting of those movements. You know that our elder indigenous intellectuals like to drink during the meetings. And we students then drank with them.*

*I used to be discriminated against. Once I was stopped by a police officer in my first year in the university who thought I was a migrant worker.<sup>87</sup> He asked me to show my ID card, even when I told him I was a student. I did not drink before going to university. Maybe that is a way to search for the identity and comfort, we*

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<sup>85</sup> Name Rectification was one of the the very first indigenous people’s social movements, enacted from the 1980s, with a constitutional amendment that abolished disrespectful Chinese Mandarin terms like ‘shandiren’(山地人), which means ‘barbarians, hill tribes, Mountain Compatriots, and so on’ (Huang and Liu 2016).

<sup>86</sup> ‘Shanbao’(山胞) is the abbreviated Chinese Mandarin for ‘Shanditonbao’, which means ‘Mountain Compatriots’.

<sup>87</sup> Since the end of the 1980s, the Taiwan government has permitted introducing foreign workers to meet the manpower needs of industry. According to official statistical data, the number of foreign wokrs has reached 700,000. Many blue-collar foreign workers come from Thailand, the Philippines and Indonesia, while their skin colour may look darker. Some indigenous people may be misidentified due to their skin colour being similar to foreign workers.

*indigenous people would drink together because it is easier to be open-hearted and talk to each other after drinking. My Master's thesis is about the migration history of our people. When I was writing up my Master's thesis, I did not know what I should bring for the elder people, so I brought alcohol. Old people do not like to talk, we Bunun are conservative, you know; but after one or two cups, they would keep talking. After I finished my study, I became a congress assistant in the Legislative Yuan. I collected data and wrote official documents for the lawmaker during the daytime, if there were social events, I had to drink on behalf my boss<sup>88</sup> since I could not let my boss down. Three years later, I could not bear it anymore. My wife signed me up for the public service examination, and I passed the exam. After that, I was designated to work in Taichung, and my wife stayed in Taipei. I was bored in Taichung; all I could do was watch TV. Then I began to drink every day and became an alcoholic. Eventually my wife got depressed and left me.*

*This is my second time coming to the AVA. The first time was three years ago. I stayed abstinent for two years but started to drink again. I thought I could control myself but finally found that I couldn't. This year, three alcoholics died in our village. I thought, will I become the fourth? What if my daughter lost her father? I ruminated for one night and then decided to come, taking this as my final chance.*

When it came to the end of the interview, Dahai asked me 'Since you are a psychiatrist, can I know why it is that I still want to drink even when I have already vomited?' I did not give him an answer. I just beat around the bush, as I always do in the therapeutic room:

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<sup>88</sup> In contemporary Chinese societies, subordinates would drink on behalf of their bosses at business occasions or events to show their loyalty.

*'It sounds like you miss the days when you were in Taipei.'*

*'I think I felt so energetic during those days.'* Dahai replied.

*'Energetic?'* I asked.

*'Sometimes I had to write something, I could be more productive when I felt intoxicated. I could have deeper affections.'*

*'You wish you could go back there?'*

*'Before I became an alcoholic, I was so happy when I was drinking. As time goes by, I wish I could pick up those feelings, but I never could.'*

I visited the AVA a few times and stayed in the farm for a night. On the evening of my stay, the Brothers were practising a Bunun gospel song that I heard almost 20 years ago in a Bunun *buluo* when I visited as a volunteer after the Jiji earthquake that happened in 1999. The song was written by a Pastor in Hsinyi Township, Nantou, where people were hugely impacted by the '921 Earthquake' in 1999 and haunted by suicide and drinking problems thereafter. The song was written in Bunu, '*Kulumaha*' meaning 'Come home, my son'. That weekend, the AVA Brothers were going to sing that song and share their testimonies in a church in Taipei.

After practising the song, they went back to the dormitory. The area surrounding the farm was so quiet and dark that I could only hear the sound of the brook and see fireflies fluttering above the drain. The wall of the dormitory was so thin that I could hear everyone's voices. The Brothers chatted to each other in a relaxed mood, sharing their pasts and futures, their feelings about newcomers. There was no privacy among the Brothers. Unlike Alcoholics Anonymous, which some of the indigenous priests had used as a method but which often failed because there are no secrets in tribal society, the AVA is a place to bare oneself under the light. The Brothers would rather

retreat from life for one and a half years and become a ‘new creation’, because they thought that they already lost everything in their life.

Although Cirow, Mr Gu and Dahai belong to different indigenous ethnic groups and variant social classes, they share similar life experience of facing discrimination and marginalisation. Their life stories are miniatures of indigenous group’s contemporary life situation, which shows the suffering from the diaspora and the crisis of self-identification that result in excessive use of alcohol.

It is a recognised method to tackle addiction by religious faith. Among many examples, the AVA model is very much like the Pentecostal ministries in Puerto Rico where substance users identify themselves as ‘ex-addicts’ and look for spiritual victory over addiction, and the cultivation of masculinities also contributes to the triumph (Hansen 2018). However, the story of the establishment of AVA and the life stories of the AVA Brothers reflects certain facts regarding self-stigmatisation and ethnic relations that are entangled within their specific political, social and economic contexts. Despite the stigma, alcohol is still perceived as a problem among indigenous societies, particularly in urban areas where labourers face more significant stress financially and in interpersonal relationships. Also, the problem may not be sorted through a top-down process, especially by public sectors. The reasons indigenous people drink should not merely be seen as personal psychological issues. After WWII, economic development impacted indigenous society significantly and resulted in migration and marginalisation. Here, drinking issues need to be included in a narrative analysis of their collective situation, along with Taiwan’s political-economic conditions and its ever-changing situation in international society.

## 7.2 Kalibuan: An Alcohol-Free *Buluo*

*When I was young,*

*I was sick of those elders*

*Who drink rice wine*

*Saying that they don't*

*Know how to live*

*But not long after that I, too,*

*Start to taste the old rice wine*

*Ihan tu* (It was)

*Tamindu dau* (when I was young)

*Tab chichi ni* (being alone)

*Ku han bav* (come to this outside world)

*Nitu haiap tu* (I don't know)

*Na makua mihumis* (how to face life)

*Ka sanavan* (every night)

*Sadu buan* (look at the moon)

*Sadu bintuhan* (look at the stars)

*Mililiskin lumaq* (miss my homeland)

*It tastes bitterer than liquor*

*Hotter than the flame*

*Was my heart eroded by loneliness?*



*Or just because of homesickness*

*Then I receive such a new friend*

*Many years have gone by*

*And things have passed*

*That I finally know the old rice wine*

*Has its affection*

*And its story*

*Old rice wine*<sup>89</sup> by Lian Soqluman



Figure 7. 5 Kalibuan, a Bunun *buluo* that has become well-known for its Alcohol-free Movement. The distant mountain in the picture is the Bunun's Sacred Mountain, *Tonku-Saveq* (Jade Mountain, the highest mountain in Taiwan).

There is no single factor that led to the high rate of drinking in the indigenous area. As for interventions, there is no 'one size fits all' solution either (Lende and

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<sup>89</sup> This song is written in Mandarin and Bunun. I have preserved the Bunun part and translated Mandarin into English. The English translations of the Bunun lyrics are in parentheses.

Fishleder 2015:144). However, it is worth looking closely at a particular case of indigenous people spontaneously organising as a community to say no to alcohol. Compared to government-led moderate drinking projects, there are fewer cases of community-based spontaneous actions that seek abstinence. Among all indigenous *buluo* in Taiwan, Kalibuan is one of the most well-known *buluo* that has admitted collectively to having drinking problems.

The song I quote here is a local folk song written in Mandarin Chinese and Bunun, written in 1988 by a young Bunun man called Lian Soqluman who fell down a valley after drinking and was severely injured. The song was adopted by his brother, Neqou Soqluman, a Bunun writer living in Kalibuan. The lyrics of the song show an ambivalent mood regarding drinking rice wine. It was common for elders to drink rice wine which tastes bitter so that young people may feel confused until they experience the bitterness of life. Neqou is also a local guide who organises Bunun people to promote local tourism that adopts Bunun's ecological ethics. In fact, Kalibuan was one of the original places for what is now the highly popular highland tourism industry.

During my fieldwork, I visited Kalibuan (Figure 7. 5 and Figure 7. 6), a Bunun *buluo* that had become well-known for its alcohol-free movement. By interviewing the local headmen and villagers, as well as analysing media and historical archives, I examined the social and historical context of the community and tried to explain the conditions in which Kalibuan became an iconic example of the alcohol-free movement.

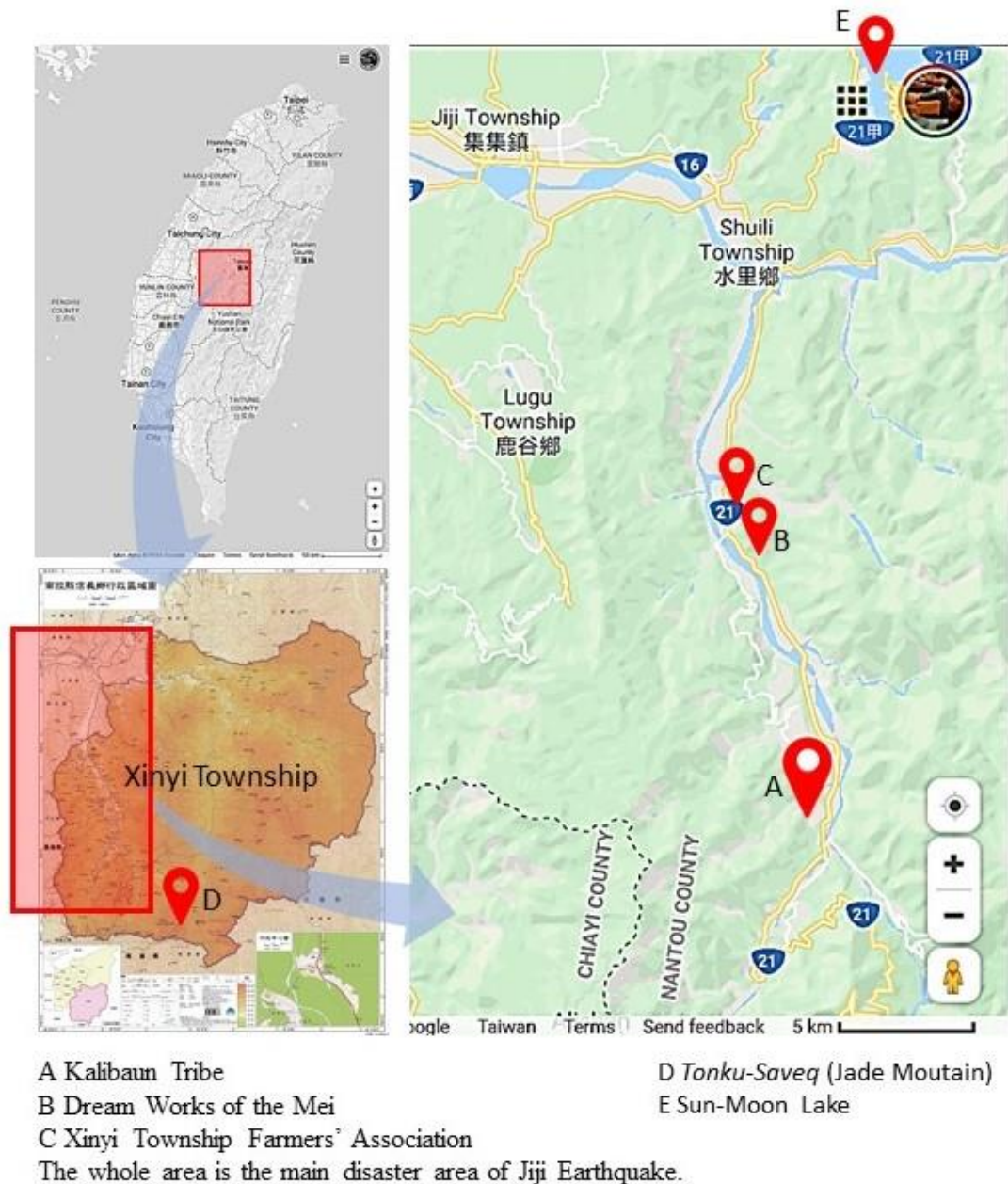


Figure 7. 6 The location of Kalibuan and its surrounding area.

### 7.2.1 An alcohol-free *buluo* that rose to fame

Xinyi Township (Bunun: *Nehunpu-siang*) is an indigenous township in Nantou County, located in the centre of Taiwan. The township is in the mountainous area home to Bunun people, who have a population total of around 16,000. The township ranks first in Taiwan in terms of plum production, reaching an annual production of 20,000

tonnes. Originally, Bunun people lived in the high mountains. During the 1930s, they were forced to migrate to their current residence under the Japanese colonial government's policy of collective relocations. Kalibuan is a Bunun *buluo* of a total population of around 600 people in Xinyi Township, and it is now a popular tourist attraction for plum blossom-watching. The name Kalibuan means 'a beautiful place with lush growth of trees', where people are mainly farmers.

In October, the news of an 'Alcohol-free *Buluo*' circulated among the indigenous communities and Kalibuan in Xinyi Township was covered by several TV channels (Figure 7. 7). In video clips, the pastor and some villagers introduce their specific mission, the 'Alcohol-Free Movement' proposed by the local pastor six years ago.



Figure 7. 7 A screenshot of the news of the Alcohol-free *Buluo*. ( Retrieved on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2017 from Apple News)

On television, the pastor of Kalibuan Chuch answered why he would like to promote the alcohol-free movement:

*'I saw our clansmen lying in a ditch or walking wobbly like zombies every day. They drink and chat in groups. There were major traffic accidents that took young people's lives every two to three years. There were just in their twenties or thirties.'*

He added, *'The most beneficial thing is to save money. One of the villagers says he can save 150000 NTD every year. The pastor says "The income of the church grows from 4000000 to 6000000."'*

'In order to help his people to stop drinking, he uses Spartan methods to ask the villagers to follow his rules,' the TV news described how the pastor leads the Alcohol-Free Movement. Whenever there is a wedding, funeral or some major event in a household, like buying a new car or a new house or bidding farewell to family members entering military service, he refuses to hold the prayer in their household if he sees bottles of alcohol on their tables. The pastor added: 'I felt perplexed - why were people getting excited when we only had mineral water?' Knowing that people poured colourless rice wine into bottles of mineral water, he then asked everyone to have the drink with colour. One of the elders said 'In the past, we would not be happy without drinking, people even drank for 12 hours continuously, the alcohol-free movement has helped us to save much money.'

### **7.2.2 The Alcohol-Free Movement: Action after the Earthquake**

It was coincidental that the televised news of the alcohol-free *buluo* came up and attracted my attention during my fieldwork. However, according to my informant in Kalibuan, it was Lin Li-chan, a congresswoman of Cambodian descent, who was the first new Taiwanese immigrant to win a seat in the Legislative Yuan, who asked the reporters to make editorial coverage of the *buluo*. As a friend of the pastor's, Lin visits Kalibuan every year. She admired Kalibuan's alcohol-free movement and thought that it was worth promotion to nationwide indigenous villages.

In October, during her oral interpellation at the meeting of the Social Welfare and Environmental Hygiene Committee of the Legislative Yuan, Lin showed the video clip of the news to Icyang Parod, Minister of the Council of Indigenous Peoples, suggesting he establish a ‘certification process’ to promote ‘alcohol-free’ and ‘non-smoking’ movements in indigenous communities by cooperating with the Ministry of Health and Welfare. She criticised the government led policies:

*‘Some voluntary activities are often better than those policies proposed by the Council of Indigenous People. They even last longer. Why can’t those government-led policies last for good? People from indigenous villages told me that they would not go on without the funding.’*

*‘Without the distraction of alcohol, they can concentrate on their work. The number of campsites increased to seven, and B&Bs increased to six. There are more and more each year. They have built eleven new houses recently. The most important thing is that their young people have come back. Moreover, they have Community Cooperatives. They do not need to go down the mountain to sell their grapes, because they need to sell them to the tourists up there.’*

*‘This movement was just promoted for the sake of their villagers’ health and environment; however, it has brought even more economic benefits.’*

(The meeting records of the 4<sup>th</sup> duration of Internal Administration Committee at the 9<sup>th</sup> session of Legislative Yuan<sup>90</sup>)

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<sup>90</sup> The video clip can be seen at the official website of the media system of Legislative Yuan. <https://ivod.ly.gov.tw/Play/VOD/100687/1M/Y> (Retrieved on 5th August 2019)

The administrative officers from both sectors highly praised the example of Kalibuan. However, Lin still did not get an affirmative answer from the Minister of the Council of Indigenous Peoples at the next meeting, held three months later. The Council of Indigenous People's decided that, rather than issuing certificates to indigenous communities, the idea of going alcohol/smoke-free should be promoted by divided sectors and plans, including the previously existent Culture and Health Stations, and the Department of Nursing and Health Care, Health Promotion Administration under the Ministry of Health and Welfare.

The Council of Indigenous Peoples felt it could not adopt the congresswoman's suggestion since alcohol use is valued differently among various indigenous communities. For Kalibuan, there must have been a specific motivation to trigger the change. 'The main reason is our economy,' the villagers said. When I asked the local people about the background of the alcohol-free movement, my informants told me:

*'If you drink, if they need you to drive, nobody would come to you. You would not be able to have further plans. Thus, there must be the implication on the economy. You can't be engaged to those works of economic production.'*

This statement seems to be ordinary. However, this common sense (Geertz 1975) answer should be seen within the historical context of Kalibuan.

Kalibuan is located in a mountainous area at an altitude of 1000 metres. The villagers are proud to settle down where they can see the Jade Mountain, Bunun's holy mountain. Like many other indigenous villages in Taiwan, Kalibuan has faced population outflow with young adults moving out to seek employment during recent decades. On 21<sup>st</sup> September 1999 the earthquake known locally as the 921 Earthquake



struck in Jiji, Nantou County, Taiwan. According to official statistical records, 2415 people were killed and 11,305 injured. According to epidemiological data, PTSD was considered a major mental health issue related to suicide and alcohol dependence after this disaster (Lai et al. 2004; Chen et al. 2007; Chou et al. 2007). After the earthquake, Kalibuan also faced unemployment and population outflow. Although the 921 Earthquake caused widespread devastation across mid-Taiwan and resulted in a high unemployment rate, it was also a turning point for Kalibuan in that young people chose to return home. The villagers established a ‘Community Cooperative’ and started to promote local tourism.

During winter, cherry blossoms grow in Kalibuan. Ten years ago, the villagers planted over 100,000 cherry tree saplings to beautify the landscape of the *buluo* in order to enhance the coherence of the people and to attract tourists.



Figure 7. 8 Kalibuan's 'living covenant'.

I visited Kalibuan following the news of the alcohol-free *buluo*, but after speaking to villagers I soon realised that ‘alcohol-free’ is just one of the goals of the ‘living covenant’ (Figure 7. 8) established by the villagers. Unlike the billboards and slogans set up in front of the local public health centres in other villages, Kalibuan people drew up their ‘living covenant’ by listing in detail ways of using public resources and



protecting the environment. Those regulations include the use of water and land, the responsibility to maintain cleanliness and safety and encouraging people to speak in their mother tongue. The regulations regarding alcohol use are encompassed in the rules of human rights and social safety that restrict local shops from selling alcohol and cigarettes to underage people and they encourage the villagers to call the police when someone makes trouble after drinking (Figure 7. 9).



Figure 7. 9 The local shop's announcement that reads 'This shop supports the idea of an alcohol-free environment and not to sell alcohol to adolescents.'

### 7.2.3 The Land and the *Pingquanhui*

In central Taiwan, there is a high degree of tension in inter-ethnic relations as well as conflict with business corporations and the state. Such strained relations may come from more complicated land issues. Today, half of the land in Kalibuan has been leased out to non-indigenous people. In fact, while there were no strict regulations on the land trade of indigenous land, some Bunun people sold their land while under the influence of alcohol. A villager told me:

*'No, nobody would like to sell land. However, if you drink a bit, those "pindiren" (平地人, in Mandarin Chinese, meaning people not living on the mountain)*

*would ask you to sign the paper. Once you sign it, you can't even regret that...  
They made the decisions without a clear mind. That's how we lost the land.  
Those "pindiren" desire the land, so they give us alcohol on purpose.'*

I asked what they bought the land for. The answer was:

*'They build greenhouses or their own houses. Some people need the land to gain eligibility for the Farmer's Health Insurance.'*<sup>91</sup>

In fact, those people are the non-indigenous people who live near the communities. During the week that I visited Kalibuan, hundreds of people held a rally in Xingyi Township, protesting the Township Office's announcement that buildings on the leased land had violated the Lease Agreement of the Indigenous Reservation Land, and calling for those buildings to be torn down. Although Xingyi Township is officially recognised as an 'indigenous township', the ethnic makeup of the residents is very mixed. The population of non-indigenous residents (around 6500 people) is almost the same as that of indigenous people. Han Chinese who migrated in from the surrounding counties have begun to run small-scale agricultural businesses since the 1960s. Some businessmen started hotels in the 1980s. Although the development may violate the reservation usage limit of indigenous land, those businesses retain the government's backing.

The major point of interethnic conflict began at the end of the 1980s when the indigenous rights movement started saying 'Return our land.' As there were even more strict regulations for trading indigenous reservation land, an organisation called the *Pingquanhui* (in Mandarin Chinese, Alliance of Taiwan Associations for

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<sup>91</sup> According to the old regulations for Taiwan's Farmer's Health Insurance, the insured person had to own his or her agricultural land. The rule was abolished in 2018.

the Promotion of Rights of Plains People Living in Mountain Districts) was then established to fight against those regulations and argued for the free trade of indigenous reservation land.

Another appeal of the *Pingquanhui* is the right to be elected as the Mayor of the township. According to the Local Government Systems Law, only indigenous people can be elected as the Mayor of the indigenous townships. Such a categorisation derives from their former identification as ‘savage land’ (番地) during the period of Japanese rule. At first, such an Alliance was just a local organisation, but it expanded to a nationwide organisation by relying on its political power and the background of big consortiums (Ku and Chang 1999). The establishment of such organisations may threaten to capitalise indigenous land. Moreover, its existence continues to reflect unfair colonial land management policies.

#### 7.2.4 Rituals without alcohol



Figure 7. 10 A stone shale that lists Bunun’s seasonal rituals and introduces the villagers’ living situations.

As part of the villagers' efforts to enhance tourism by changing the tribal landscape, each household made a stone-decorated wall to show the history of their family. At the entrance to the *buluo*, the decoration on the wall introduces the villagers' living situations from the 1970s in which people mainly engaged in the work of forestry and mushroom farming (Figure 7. 10).

However, Kalibuan does not have that many ceremonies now, although some young people wish to restore the traditional rituals. Christianity first entered Kalibuan in the 1950s, and now the whole community has converted to Christianity. Nowadays, many of the traditional Bunun rituals have declined or been simplified and many have also changed because of conversion to Christianity. For example, in Kalibuan, the traditional Harvest Ceremony, *Masalut*, was changed to Thanksgiving. Another important ritual to celebrate newborns, called *Indohdohan* or *Masuhaulus* (hanging necklaces), has been changed to Baby Day and its form to a Christian prayer ceremony. In the past, parents who had given birth during the previous year would host a feast for the whole village at the time of the full moon from July to August. The traditionally made millet wine (*kadavus*) and the slaughter of pigs were the prerequisites then, but now the pastor asks villagers to stop using alcohol, whether modern drinks or traditional ones.

*'In Bunun, traditional brewed millet wine is called "tavus", which is exactly the same as the Bunun word meaning 'sweetness'. However, there is no more tavus used for rituals in Kalibuan. [...] In the past, the officiant of the ceremony was a traditional Bunun tribal priest and now it is the pastor. The Bunun priest prayed to the sky, now we still pray to the sky, but that is our God the Father. [...] After conversion to Christianity, everything still has its sacred meaning, except*

*alcohol. Once there is a traditional performance, in this village, I would ask them not to use real alcohol.'*

(Sai Isqaqavut, Pastor in Kalibuan)

The authority of the church plays an important role in changing lifestyles and religious practices. However, the critical reason that Kalibuan has promoted the alcohol-free movement more successfully than other communities is not merely due to religious constraints. The negative values that the tribal elites attach to alcohol may also have contributed to the movement, especially when alcohol is used to trade land and is considered an obstacle to making money.

In Kalibuan, unlike most indigenous villages which have different churches in a single community, 96% of its people are members of the Presbyterian Church' according to the pastor. The unity of the church creates solidarity of the people, although there was still some resistance to change at the beginning. Furthermore, since the pastor was born and bred in Kalibuan, it is easier for him to establish authority to persuade his people not to drink. Kalibuan is not the only one that has tried to abstain from alcohol, but it seems to be a 'successful' example if we consider success based on a psychiatrist's common sense view that alcohol use is harmful. In terms of the alcohol-free movement, Kalibuan has specific conditions that make it easier, but it is not fair to describe it as easy since it is never a simple task for Kalibuan residents.

The purpose of telling the story of Kalibuan is not to imply feasibility regarding intervention in indigenous drinking problems. There is a need to zoom out and see how the problem began. How can we explain this case of an alcohol-free *buluo* that rose to fame overnight? To what extent and why did Kalibuan choose to 'come out'?

What is the context, and how much of it has been manipulated by news media? It seems that Kalibuan has set up a model of tribal solidarity to pursue a better life and health, but I would point out specific meanings in certain respects. First, although the coverage of the alcohol-free *buluo* may be just the congressman's tool to persuade the government to establish a certification process, the villagers also accept their identity as ex-addicts. Compared to the AVA, such an identity is a more collective one. Second, Kalibuan bears the stigma and transforms it through establishing solidarity to fight against the threat of natural disasters, political marginalisation and competition with majority groups, whether this is successful or not. Third, if such a movement is successful, it may not be compatible with other communities because of their different social and historical contexts, as well as the various ways to define and practise their culture in an era of rapid change.

### **7.3 Post-Disaster Rehabilitations**

Drinking issues among indigenous people have always been labelled as mental health problems. These often attracted particular government's attention after natural disasters. However, it is problematic to define indigenous people's post-disaster situations by such reductive health narratives. Although mental health interventions often become the major focus of post-disaster rehabilitation, indigenous people do not benefit much from them. This subchapter introduces the puzzled situation of post-disaster rehabilitation, mainly focused on the case of Typhoon Morakot. Drinking issues may have been highlighted after the disasters, but indigenous people tried to restore their normal lives in their own ways, which also show the resistance against the health narratives of 'unhealthy others'.

### **7.3.1 Beyond the medical perspectives**

Indigenous people traditionally live in mountainous or coastal areas which are ecologically vulnerable to natural disasters. In the past two decades, there were two major natural disasters in Taiwan which had a tremendous impact on indigenous people's lives. The first is the 921 Earthquake in Jiji which took 2415 lives on the 21<sup>st</sup> of September 1999 (see Chapter 7.2.2). The other was Typhoon Morakot (known as Typhoon Kiko in the Philippines).

Both the earthquake and the typhoon compelled the government, health professionals and local activists to think about how to improve post-disaster rehabilitation. Among those post-disaster intervention plans, mental health has been a major focus. Research carried out indicated that indigenous people who were victims of the typhoon were also vulnerable to mental disorders (Yang et al. 2010; Yen et al. 2010; Chen et al. 2011; Chang, Chen, and Lung 2012; Lo, Su, and Chou 2012; Chen et al. 2015; Tang et al. 2015). Within the mental health paradigm, tackling problematic drinking has come to the fore as a task of great importance.

When Typhoon Morakot hit southern Taiwan on 8<sup>th</sup> August 2009 it brought tremendous rainfall that exceeded the total local annual rainfall in two days. It is also known as the 88 Flood since the typhoon reached Taiwan on August 8<sup>th</sup>, causing severe floods and landslides. It was the deadliest typhoon in Taiwan's recorded history and brought catastrophic damage to the country, leaving 673 people dead and 26 missing. The most serious tragedy during this time was the landslide that buried 462 people in Xiaolin, a plains indigenous people's village that consisted of mainly Siraya Taivoan people (Figure 7. 11).



Figure 7. 11 In Xiaolin Village Memorial Park hundreds of empty tombs were established along the highway that connects Shanlin to Namasia.

Compared to the Jiji 921 Earthquake in 1999, the government was criticised for being late in offering rescue and assistance after the 88 Flood. The government chose to outsource the post-disaster rehabilitation work to NGOs, which led to inconsistency in the implementation of policies. It has been repeatedly reported that the policy of post-Morakot rehabilitation related to forced immigration has generated certain negative effects, such as declining social cohesion or maladaptation to new settlements. Scholars have pointed out that the relocation and reconstruction policy has brought about several problems, such as neglecting the indigenous people's subjectivity and autonomy, even depriving people of the right to use lands which were originally bound to indigenous people's lives, and the rapid, time-pressured reconstruction has resulted in communities splitting and communication breakdowns (Shieh et al. 2012; Shieh, Chen, and Lin 2013; Lin 2018). I went to the disaster area right after Typhoon Morakot occurred while I was working as a resident psychiatrist in Kaohsiung. Afterwards, I visited a Rukai community for a research project to investigate indigenous people's mental health after the disaster. We were expected to



rate the level of depression by using standardised questionnaires. However, contrary to the research outlined above, several local people told me that they felt happier than ever: ‘I never saw our people show such solidarity. People would ask me whether I needed a hand when I stood on the roadside.’ Such answers challenged my medical presuppositions, and encouraged me to listen to the people in more narratively charged ways.

During my fieldwork from 2017 to 2018, I arranged short visits to the disaster area to see how indigenous people have managed post-disaster (Figure 7. 17). The first is Da-ai Village, a permanent housing community founded by a Buddhist Charity, Tzu Chi Foundation, in Shanlin Township, to host victims who had to be relocated. The other one is Takanua, an indigenous community located in the mountains, where their people chose to stay in their homeland and have been trying to rebuild the community. To juxtapose the two cases here does not mean to judge the post-disaster rehabilitation in either case but to capture how people reacted to the disaster. These places offer two examples of post-disaster rehabilitation, each with very different relationships with alcohol.

### **7.3.2 Da-ai Village: A picture of relocated people**

*‘The ambulance and the police soon arrived at the Da-ai (Great Love) village. They saw a man lying on the floor. The police found that a self-made petroleum bomb was attached to the man’s body, and realised that he was about to attempt suicide.’*

Taiwan Indigenous Television,<sup>92</sup> 15<sup>th</sup> September 2013

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<sup>92</sup> Taiwan Indigenous Television (TITV) is a non-commercial public TV channel operated by Taiwan Broadcasting System in Taiwan.

Excessive drinking is a common post-disaster phenomenon among indigenous communities. The televised news of a man who could not afford the fine for drunk driving and thus attempted suicide reveals the general situation in Da-ai Village, a post-disaster resettlement housing community that was paid for and built by the Buddhist Compassion Relief Tzu Chi Foundation<sup>93</sup>.

It was extremely quiet and empty in Da-ai Village in Shanlin District during my visit. It was years since the typhoon had struck. It was a hot sunny day and the artificial lake in the village had already dried. Statues of Tzu Chi volunteers helping indigenous people rebuild their homeland were still standing there, but the paint was fading (Figure 7. 12).



Figure 7. 12 Statues of Tzu Chi volunteers helping indigenous people rebuild their homeland.

Originating from the founder, Master Cheng-yen's successful branding of her charisma and compassion, Tzu Chi foundation has become one of the largest NGOs and humanitarian organisations in the world (Huang 2009). After Typhoon Morakot, the government established some permanent housing by collaborating with NGOs to relocate indigenous people under pressure to speed up reconstruction. Da-ai Village in

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<sup>93</sup> The Buddhist Compassion Relief Tzu Chi Foundation was founded by Mastor Cheng Yen, a famous Taiwanese Buddhist nun. The foundation is most well known for its disaster relief efforts worldwide. It recruits thousands of volunteers every year to take part in its various missions.

Shanlin is one of the biggest permanent housing sites built by the biggest Buddhist NGO, Tzu Chi Foundation, which spent 2.6 billion NTD on the project. In the beginning, Da-ai Village was designed to accommodate more than 1000 households. Facilities include a primary school, a community centre, churches and a shopping area. According to the government's official statement, the village was established as an 'ever-lasting community', but half of the houses are empty now.

Although Tzu Chi gained a reputation as a life-saving pioneer during the disasters, the way they designed the landscape of the village and other regulations for lifestyles has been criticised as not respecting the subjectivity of indigenous people. Although the village was planned as a multi-religious living area, the most notorious feature is the 'Tzu Chi Ten Commandments', which prohibit substance use including alcohol. Wumas, the Bunun pastor of a Christian church set up in the village told me, 'it was placed in my church', pointing at the blank wall of the church. He explained this further, laughing: 'Interesting. It was just fitted over there. The elders were very annoyed, they said "We are not members of Tzu Chi", then they tore down the Commandments'. He went on: 'The first commandment they knocked out was the "No drinking" one. However, I thought it was the one I would like to keep.'

I have known Wumas for almost 20 years. The first time I met him was in a Bible reading camp when we were all college students. His father was the pastor who served in a Bunun church in Xinyi Township, Nantou, where the 1999 Jiji 921 Earthquake wrought catastrophic damage. I visited Wumas's father's church when I took part in a Christian fellowship medical aid team after the earthquake. Wumas developed his dislike for alcohol because his father, who he told me is now in intensive care, drinks a lot. When I visited him in 2018, he was already married with a son. He had been serving the church four years and told me about his work in it: 'I

have been dealing with people who died. I remember the first ten funerals that I conducted; the deceased had all died from drinking.'

The indigenous pastors I have met exhibit different attitudes toward drinking. Some are sensitive to the stigmatisation when I mention drinking as a problem, but some take firm positions of saying no to alcohol. Wumas is among the latter. Before Wumas's arrival in Da-ai Village, the church members had a conflict with the former pastor over a financial issue. They thought that the former pastor did not manage the church finances properly, and even took him to court. In fact, the money in question was a grant from the local government's *jiejiu* project. After Typhoon Morakot, the Director-General of Kaohsiung Public Health Bureau proposed this plan to the Council of Indigenous Peoples and acquired a grant of 3 million NTD. The *jiejiu* project has been carried out in collaboration with 12 churches in indigenous townships, including Da-ai Village in Shanlin, which were struck by the typhoon. However, after his negative experience, Wumas decided not to take these subsidies anymore.

According to Wumas, the problem of alcohol use was serious at the beginning when people had just moved in. At that time, 'Violence or theft related to drinking happened every day,' he told me, relaying anecdotes he had heard, 'but things changed in recent years because some of the heavy drinkers have passed away.' However, he suggested a main reason for the decline of alcoholism: 'In my opinion, those middle-aged people may have been worse, but those who are under 40, although not really sober, they are less severe, since they have to survive here.'

After Typhoon Morakot, the government worked with the corporate sector to create job opportunities for people living in Da-ai Village. Yonglin Organic Farm, the largest organic farm in Taiwan, was established on land leased from Taiwan Sugar

Company and is operated by the Yonglin Foundation, which was founded by Taiwan's Foxconn Technology Group. The farm was operated under the BOPT model (Build, Operate, Profit, Transfer), which was meant to train villagers to learn farming techniques and establish their own economic interest groups. However, employed workers have a high turnover rate and so people seldom get permanent jobs there. This was partly because the indigenous people who were familiar with traditional farming do not adopt high-tech farming skills. Moreover, many indigenous women who need flexible working hours to take care of their families would not be accepted by the current logic of production that demands rigidly structured working hours.

Currently, most jobs in the village are provided by the Ministry of Labour's Empowerment Employment Programme, which gives employees the minimum wage based on the Labour Standard Laws. People who take these jobs are mostly women or elderly people. Once the programme comes to an end, people lose their living allowance. Most middle-aged people move out to seek other employment. Wumas explained:

*'This is not the place they want to live forever. What I have heard is that young people all think so. Those people who are above 40s still think they will back in their home village someday.'*

The Da-ai Village built by Tzu Chi Foundation under the government's 'Build-operate-transfer' model has been criticised as unable to fulfil villagers' needs. The ban on smoking and alcohol set up by Tzu Chi, added to the government's *jiejiu* project, also resulted in backlash among villagers. However, the Bunun people in Da-ai Village still try to build their self-confidence by organising sports activities and developing their characteristic education.



Figure 7. 13 School pupils performing *Malastapang* under outdoor scaffolding.

Wumas took me for a ‘grand tour’ in the village before I left. We met a group of educational inspectors from the government who had come to visit a primary school. The school’s hard structure was built by Tzu Chi but the villagers re-designed the teaching programmes with the purpose of carrying forward Bunun culture. Kids gathered under the outdoor scaffolding, where the teacher directed their performance of *Malastapang*, a praising ritual that Bunun people use to celebrate the triumph of their hunters (Figure 7. 13). ‘We seldom use the classrooms now,’ Pastor Wumas said. Although villagers have been asked to adopt a Tzu Chi lifestyle, they make every effort to live their own way.

### **7.3.3 Women Power in Takanua**

#### **7.3.3.1 ‘Women’s Cave’**

Despite the life-threatening risks of staying in their homeland, Namasia people have been reluctant to accept the government’s suggestion to relocate. Takanua is located in Namasia Township, where the famous Moderate Drinking Project ‘The Love of Maya’ was held (see Chapter 3.2.3). After the typhoon, Takanua became one of the indigenous communities to resist the top-down relocation policy and it has

gradually scaled up a post-disaster living model. Local women have played key roles in the community's rehabilitation.

It was Christmas time in Namasia during my visit and houses were decorated with colourful lights and ribbons. Compared to the Atayal houses in Wufeng, houses in Namasia are tightly connected to their neighbours, so outdoor space appeared to be roomier and flatter. Villagers gathered in front of the houses to have dinner and, of course, drink together. Empty beer bottles were piled up outside grocery stores and local restaurants, not to mention Paolyta. There were bottles scattered outside but none of them can be seen in the stores, just as occurs in indigenous communities elsewhere.

I was sitting in a school chair, watching student volunteers give a lesson on gender education to the pupils in their classroom, where Kaohsiung City Indigenous Women Sustainable Development Association (IWSDA, 社團法人高雄市原住民婦女永續發展協會) assigned the area as space for after-school activities (Figure 7. 14). The association settled in Takanua, an indigenous community that consists of two major ethnic groups, Bunun and Kanakanav, in Namasia Township, over two hours' drive from Kaohsiung City.

Kids were extremely energetic, and houses built from metal sheets were full of noise and excitement. The volunteer raised her voice and tried to control the chaos, but it was in vain. Telly, a 12-year-old girl whose name is similar to the name of Typhoon 'Talim' which struck Namasia in 2012, was giving her two brothers a talking to at the corner of the room because they had just had a fight. The way she scolded her brother was just like a grown-up. One boy was poking at another boy's body jokingly, but this still made the boy cry.



Figure 7. 14 The volunteers were giving a lesson on gender education to the kids in Takanua.

The volunteers tried to speed up their lesson to complete the mission since they had prepared for this for a long time. They took a group picture before dismissing the after-school club, which was followed by dinner. Kids were served meals made by one of the association members. They said grace before the meal, and then sounds of talking, laughing and shouting filled the entire dining room (or rather the office) again. They went home at around 8:00 p.m., when their parents had finished work and returned from the city. At the door, Apuu, one of the association members, caressed the face of the boy who had upset other children that afternoon. She told us:

*‘That boy’s father was killed accidentally. Did you read the news, a hunter mis-shot a guy after the typhoon? He is one of that guy’s kids. Yes, I admonished him seriously, but I gave him a hug soon after. I told him that I will be right here waiting for him. I had to tell him that I care about him. Every kid here has his or her problems, some of them do not even have parents.’*



In mid-December 2017, I visited Takanua with a group of graduate students from Kaohsiung Medical University's (KMU) Graduate Institute of Gender Studies. Their teacher had built a trustworthy relationship with IWSDA and conducted post-disaster research for several years there, and students also often lead after-school clubs or holiday camps for gender education there. Unlike one-way and top-down student volunteering, these gender education sessions have been designed to be of mutual benefit so that students learn about the organisational actions of the local community and local people are empowered by new perspectives on gender equality.

Founded in 2003, IWSDA followed the government's 'Sustainable Taiwan Development Employment Programme' (永續就業工程計畫). At first, the association focused on the afterschool clubs in response to the rising need for childcare in the indigenous community. Since the association was organised by women, they gave it the nickname 'Women's Cave'. However, after Typhoon Morakot, the association has become more active and the participants have strengthened their mutual aid by providing shelter to people who lost their houses and family members. Apuu told me:

*'There were many services such as "elders' care" post-typhoon. However, most of volunteers do not know the specific needs of minority groups. For example, most of us are Bunun and Kanakanav and do not enjoy dancing that much, but we were asked to dance while they delivered the services. Some elders were anxious to rush to the site because they had to take care of children and sometimes we even had to look after their grandchildren.'*

Apuu told me about experiences of how everyone supported each other after the disaster. Although plenty of volunteers flooded into the disaster area, local people may see them as a burden, but they nevertheless provide mutual support more than

usual. Apuu explained the difference between the self-organised community support and food deliveries provided by outsiders:

*'We would cook together and deliver meals. I did witness them [volunteers from outside the community] send the meal boxes to the door sides without knocking on the doors. The dogs ate them all. They did not even know whether the elders were at home or not. Since then, we decided to take care of the elders (on our own), and that was the origin of "Tamu's meal" (Tamu meaning elderly people).'*

Takanua women showed their resilience during the men's absence to the role of caregivers, and such resilience was reinforced by the disaster. Similar to many other indigenous communities, a high divorce rate and men's employment as labourers in urban areas means men are often absent in local communities. Women who look after the household may also need to work in nightclubs in the city. The discrimination against vulnerable people who are not able to fulfil social expectations has created a vicious circle that reduce vulnerable people to an inferior status. Accordingly, the Women Cave started to give lessons to the children ten years ago. Women help each other in their spare time. Apuu told me:

*'It is a community in which women suffered extreme discrimination. We don't have secrets here. Any gossip would spread in five minutes. Kids are often neglected when their parents are criticised, whatever happened to them, like alcoholism being present. It takes us great effort to urge our members to become the tutors that come out from their houses in the evening. When a mother*

*becomes a teacher, it can be a chance for her to be recognised again. That is a place for women to be mutually healed.'*

### **7.3.3.2 Usuru, To'onnatamu and the bakery**



Figure 7. 15 The bakery kiln in *To'onnatamu* built by Takanua villagers.

In order to build the solidarity of the community, Takanua people set up a hut near the original community. They created a place that people would feel relieved when staying in it. Whenever there is an emergency, people would come to this place together. The hut was built mainly from wood and bricks, materials left over from the reconstruction and it was named '*To'onnatamu*', which means the place where there the elders are (Figure 7. 15).

To empower women, IWSDA initiated their *Usuru* plan, which means the 'Women's Farm' and urged women to come to this public place instead of staying in the house. They started the farm rehabilitation plan to plant millet, cassava and taros which used to be the staple food of their people. At first, they did not know the term *Usuru*, until people remembered women participating in farming several decades ago

when men had to leave the house for many days. To start, Takanua women consulted the elders on how to seed and cultivate the farm. Children were brought to the field to take part, the old men teaching them to sow the seeds where the first drop of sunshine falls and reminding them to avoid clashing their hoes together. There is a strict procedure of *rumarapu-vinau* (seeding). ‘No clamouring, no farting’, the old men said, ‘you should start this with right hands. When seeding, you should talk to the seeds. If the two hoes crash into another, you should get out of the field and restart. it means you are not focused enough.’

*To’onnatamu* is a new ‘hub’ for the local people to reconnect to each other. IWSDA members jokingly said that the whole area of the *buluo* is their kitchen since they try to collect the ingredients from the villagers. Local crops, such as pumpkins, black quinoa and roses, were mixed in their bread. They even exchanged materials and techniques with other indigenous groups:

*‘Once we went to Hsinchu Jienshi Township to learn how to make organic yeast from Atayal people, they gave us tmmyan (Atayal brined meat), and we gave back the bread made of tmmyan mixed with our turmeric.’*

By way of restoring the traditional methods of cultivation as well as creating the new menu for the ‘kitchen of the land’, Takanua women established a new support network which shows a different landscape of gender roles. This helped reinforce interpersonal connections and cultural identity after the disaster.

Dried millet bundles were hung under the roof of *To’onnatamu*, just like those decorations that can be seen in many other indigenous communities. A picture caught my attention, showing someone pouring a kind of white liquid with red petals into a cup (Figure 7. 16). I asked the local people what it was and they proudly introduced me to their invention of rose millet wine. In recent years, like many other indigenous

villages' experience, Takanua people have started to make millet wine, as part of activities to restore traditional culture. Instead of making traditional millet wine, they have tried putting a new flavour into the drink. Such creative and exchange practices, around alcohol and other commodities, have become new signs or simply phenomena of local cultural revitalisation. Takanua people even include winemaking lessons in their Culture-Health Station programmes, but unfortunately, it has always been rejected by the inspectors from the supervising authority, namely the Council of Indigenous Peoples.

However, from some of the local people's point of view, the Council of Indigenous Peoples is just an appendage organisation of the colonial regime, which is against the subjectivity of indigenous groups. The denial of wine-making reveals two things: firstly, the concept of well-being defined by public sectors is insensitive to indigenous people's fear of cultural breakdown; secondly, contemporary health narratives based on colonial rationality have taken indigenous people as unhealthy others and victims of alcohol use.



Figure 7. 16 A picture hanging under the roof of *To'onnatamu*, showing someone pouring rose millet wine.

A study that confronts the obsession with indigenous people's vulnerability and resilience regarding disaster states that 'advocates of indigenous knowledge claim that coping with disaster is to a large extent part of the "normality"' (Hilhorst et al. 2015:508). It reminds me of a visit to Wumas (the Bunun pastor mentioned in Chapter 7.3.2) in Nantou 20 years ago after the earthquake; he told me that Bunun people would not play where the rocks are playing. However, it might be too optimistic to simply assert that indigenous people's resilience comes from their traditional knowledge. Hilhorst et al. (ibid. 520) explain that

'understandings of what it means to be indigenous are not fixed in time, and are subject to social processes and interactions between indigenous communities and other actors, including the state or indigenous movements.'

This insightful perspective helps us understand how indigenous people respond to disasters. After Typhoon Morakot, indigenous people showed their different values and styles of rehabilitation from the state's intervention and NGOs' humanitarian aid. As for drinking, we can take the winemaking lessons as an example. Although the lessons were rejected by the public sector, the ways in which the refinement of millet-wine making has incorporated the local creativity of an indigenous younger generation has prevailed across the different communities in recent years. The practices beyond everyday life reflect the will either to restore or refashion the winemaking culture. They also generate a counter-narrative as a resistance against the stereotype of unhealthiness.

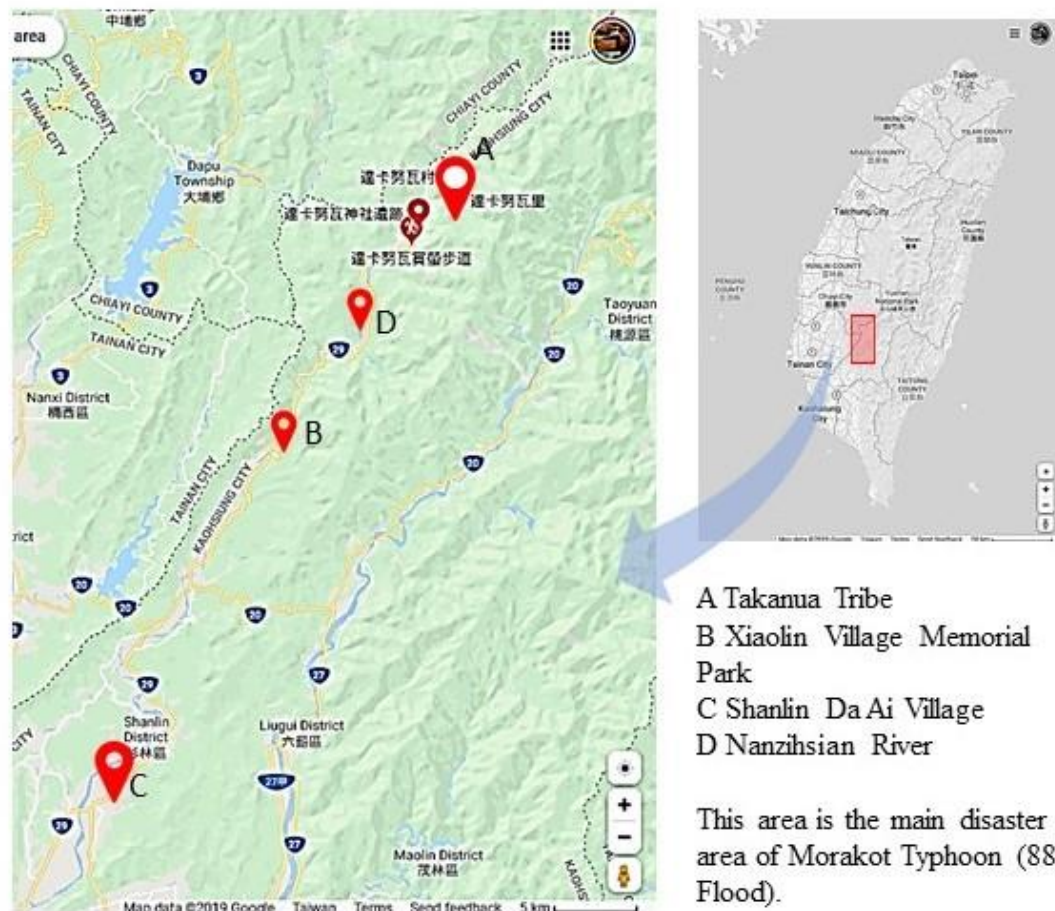


Figure 7. 17 The map of the Typhoon Morakot disaster area and the sites that I visited.

## 7.4 Resilience from the margin

Given that indigenous people are living with disasters, it is unjustified to say disaster is no big deal for indigenous people; disasters have had disproportionate impacts on different groups in Taiwan. Indigenous people are not only suffering from natural disasters but bear the results of unequal development and exacerbating ecosystems, which lead to involuntarily displacement. To describe the vulnerable groups' everyday life, Nixon (2011) uses the concept of 'slow violence' and 'developmental refugees' which are used to portray the 'everyday disaster' (Wiebe 2017:143-144) of indigenous people's current life situation.

Although I describe urban indigenous people's drinking practices as intoxicated diaspora and conviviality in Chapter 6, this does not mean indigenous people are losing control over alcohol use. Settled in the city's margins, displaced people from different ethnic groups choose to live together when they eventually emplace themselves in their second homeland. Indigenous people may rationalise the binges in some ways, but they nevertheless re-organise their communities and live in a relatively sober manner.

#### **7.4.1 Libahak and CAS Farm**

It was dark by 7:00 p.m. during the winter. Yuciy, an Atayal woman, wore a headtorch, patrolling the houses in Qianjia to call everyone together. Some people set up fires to keep warm; some were already drunk. It was the first meeting of the year for the Libahak Association and the indigenous people in Qianjia were discussing their annual plan for the community. The meeting was held in a semi-open scaffolded shed, which community members use as multi-functional hub. It is used as the Qianjia residents' meeting place, the classroom for food and agriculture education and as a living room for guest hospitality. However, Qianjia people have negotiated with the local government many times about the legality of these constructions. Like many other urban indigenous communities in Taiwan, the settlement has been set up in a marginal area of the city as a grey zone of legal residence. The association was established in 2011, when two key people met to propose a plan for a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farm.

Yuciy, a former Science Park worker, came to Qianjia to take care of indigenous children since she found that her daughter, as well as other children from indigenous families, had been mistreated in city schools. Yuciy still remembers what she saw



when she first came Qianjia, the alcohol bottles and broken glass on the ground, and felt she had to do something: 'I couldn't find a place to stand.' In 2013, the Libahak Association was founded in order to maintain the running of the CSA farm. Since then, the wine bottles have started to decrease: 'By doing this, we found there are fewer people binge drinking here,' Yuciy told me. She explained the Association's establishment:

'We were just thinking, if there is something that happens [...] Before the establishment of the association, several people had traffic accidents or got injured in their workplaces, their bosses denied responsibility. Many times, I had to help them get legal assistance. Actually, the most difficult part is to accompany and advocate for them. The current Association chairwoman and I started to work together. Two to three years later, we launched the farm. Since we had to apply for allowances from public sector funding, such as the "Multiple Employment Promotion Programme", we established the Association.'

Mr Chen Chien-Tai, a Science Park engineer, worked with Yuciy to enhance the mutually supportive community. His ethnic background is Hakka, a Han Chinese Hakka-speaking ethnic minority who traditionally live an agricultural life in rural areas. He promotes non-toxic, organic farming to fulfil his dream of returning to his childhood lifestyle. He also does so to ensure a healthier way of life for indigenous residents. The idea of the Association's name, 'Libahak', was an Amis term proposed by their *Tou-mu*, who was elected to become the community's leader, meaning 'wholehearted satisfaction and joy'. At the beginning, it was established to ensure the farm's financial independency. The farm adopted the model of organic agriculture to grow plants and its crops can feed about 50 households, the majority of which are

cooperative consumers from Hsinchu Science Park. Indigenous people here are consulted about sharing their traditional botanical knowledge with the farm's supporters. The operation of the farm is based on the spirit of reciprocity, so that indigenous people can gain respect from the mainstream society of the city.

As previously mentioned in Chapter 6,<sup>94</sup> the South bank of Tou-qian River (頭前溪) is well known for the industrial chemical pollution that occurred in the 1980s. The local government announced a ban on building new houses in the area. That was also the origin of the Hsinchu Science Park, the 'Silicon Valley of Taiwan'. Along with urban development over the past 30 years, the riverbank area has become more and more desolate. Meanwhile, indigenous migrant workers choose to settle down in this area, since they find the place's agricultural landscape to be somewhat like their home villages.

Some people give more species of plants to support the farm. Once Yuciy pointed out some purple flowers, telling me they are called '*ji-jiao-ci*' (*Cirsium albescens*), a kind of traditional herbal medicine for treating liver disease (Figure 7. 18). A friend of Yuciy's gave that to her since he thought that it could be useful for indigenous people. Such stories show the ever present stereotypes of indigenous people.

The farm has adapted 'permaculture' as a method of agricultural reform.<sup>95</sup> In Qianjia CSA farm, the scattered piles of soil are covered with withered twigs, leaves and rice stems, which are mixed with horse manure and homemade microbial inoculants. Some cooperative consumers have become volunteers of the association.

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<sup>94</sup> See Chapter 6.3.2 Indigenous labourers in Hsinchu.

<sup>95</sup> According to Permaculture Association, Permaculture is 'a design process. It helps design intelligent systems which meet human needs whilst enhancing biodiversity, reducing our impact on the planet, and creating a fairer world for us all. People across the globe are creating thriving communities with permaculture'. (Retrieved from the website of Permaculture Association on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2019.)

They launch various child-friendly programmes that attract more families in Hsinchu City to take part.

Besides vegetables for daily food, there are plants that indigenous people used to grow in their homelands, such as millet and red quinoa that many use as ingredients for traditional food and brewing. These plants are grown to educate visitors. More importantly, Qianjia residents use the narrative of organic agriculture to demonstrate a healthy lifestyle and break the stereotype that indigenous people are unhealthy or toxic.

Yuciy fluently introduced the crops that they plant to me, as if introducing the farm to many other visitors, as she had done hundreds of times. The CSA farm is not the 'solution' to drinking problems; however, indigenous people do take it as a demonstration of a non-intoxicated lifestyle to non-indigenous groups. According to Yuciy, the CSA farm plays an important role in changing people's impressions of indigenous communities. More urban residents come to visit the farm, and the community members have started to clean up the environment and change their lifestyles little by little.

The Lebahak association and the Qianjia CSA farm might have established a successful model of community organisation for urban indigenous people. However, the small scale of the movement makes it difficult to counter the marginalisation faced by this group, not to mention the possibility of copying or promoting it in other places. Organising the Libahak community requires certain key people to devote themselves to the movement and help people gather more resources, people like Yuciy and Mr Chen Chien-Tai. Secondly, mainstream society still neglects the collective advantages for indigenous people. Although the local government may attempt to cooperate with indigenous communities like the Libahak Association, that may be just a gesture for

the government to create its image of co-prosperity in the city. The government may try to make use of indigenous people to enhance its media image or exposure.



Figure 7. 18 *Ji-jiao-ci* (*Cirsium albescens*), a kind of traditional herbal medicine for liver disease

#### 7.4.2 Singing Competition as Sober Conviviality

I was told by Libahak residents at the beginning of 2018 that there would be a singing competition during the summer. This competition was well-planned beforehand. Singing competitions are popular among indigenous groups, not only because indigenous people are generally considered to be good singers, but because singing competitions held in urban areas serve as a gesture of keeping ‘sober,’ a

symbol of good citizenship. The event was intended to enhance communication and cohesion, but it also reveals the undercurrent of indigenous groups' competitiveness within their collective marginalisation.

Throughout the year, urban indigenous people hold various events to consolidate their communities, and the Libahak and Naruwan Associations are no exception. Sometimes the local communities invite residents from other places to take part. The dragon boat competition hosted by the local government is one of the annual activities that indigenous communities team up for and enthusiastically participate in. In 2018, due to the ongoing construction of the coastal highway, the dragon boat competition was called off. However, they shifted their efforts to the singing competition this year.

On the day of competition, I arrived at the venue at 4:00 p.m. when the summer heat was starting to lessen. The competition was held to take place at the plaza near the Hsinchu City Hall. Yuciy, who had decided to run in the election for county council representatives, was welcoming her invited guests. There was a consulting station providing the employees with information. Lions Clubs International members were taking group pictures, as proof of their social participation. There was a pile of gifts prepared for raffle prizes during the event. Residents from Qianjia, wearing the light blue t-shirt uniform of the Libahak Association, happily set up the venue together.

The competition lasted a day and contestants' ages ranged from 15 to 60. Since the event organiser proposed the goal of promoting indigenous native languages, an extra 10% was added to the scores of contestants who sang in their mother tongues. There were professional singers who performed during the intervals between amateurs' performances. Despite the added points for using one's native language, most contestants sang popular Chinese songs. Young participants would even imitate

current pop stars' from TV shows to win their friends' applause, rather than to win the prizes.

In terms of drinking practices, fewer beer cans and bottles could be spotted than in events held in rural villages or where people have settled at the frontier areas of the city. Some young participants and their friends bought beer from the convenience stores nearby, but they sipped it rather than drinking rowdily. Whether or not it is a coincidence that the event took place beside the Tobacco & Liquor company, the event intentionally or otherwise avoided the use of alcohol to create a 'sober moment' in the city centre, which attempted to highlight indigenous people's good citizenship in opposition to the stigma of chaos and addiction.

At the end, the championship was given to a Bunun student who had been severely burned at the age of two and received the President's Education Award previously for her hard work during her school life. She sang a hymn she had written herself. During the scoring, there was an impromptu session that welcomed the audience to take part. The mood then came to a climax when volunteer singers began to dance and sing passionately, the festive atmosphere like wedding events in their home villages. Finally, all contestants were invited to sing '*Wo men du shi yi jia ren*' (Mandarin: 我們都是一家人, meaning 'We are a Family')<sup>96</sup> together on the stage.

Holding the singing competition at the heart of the city confronts the fate of marginalisation. Not like the conviviality ceremonies that take place at the riverside, the 'dry' ceremony reflects a gesture to live sober in order to remove the alcoholism stigma. But like traditional ceremonies held in their home villages, there are dynamic characters on a 'revolving stage' to demonstrate inward and outward at the same

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<sup>96</sup> The song '*Wo men du shi yi jia ren*' (我們都是一家人 We are a Family) is famous indigenous song sung in Mandarin Chinese. It was popular among indigenous communities but is now widely used on many occasions, such as elections or as political propaganda, since the lyrics call for solidarity of the people.

time.<sup>97</sup> In a way, indigenous groups build up their identity and solidarity through their performance, and it also becomes a competitive arena for indigenous subgroups who settle in the same administrative district to gain benefits from limited resources.



Figure 7. 19 The performers waiting at the prepatory area of the singing competition.

## 7.5 The *Buluo* Meetings: In Search of Autonomy

In the mid-1980s, indigenous people in Taiwan started to demand their collective rights for self-determination and set their ultimate goal of self-government. Since then, the concept of rights has been continuously renegotiated. In pursuing indigenous self-government, establishing *Buluo* Councils<sup>98</sup> is a crucial step as a legal basis of the ‘the rights to be consulted and informed consent’, proposed in the newly administered Indigenous Peoples Basic Law in 2018.

There has been a tradition of indigenous people discussing public affairs within *buluo* communities. However, since the bureaucracy of the modern state has replaced

<sup>97</sup> See Chapter 5.2.2 Pslkawtas day and night: the revolving stage of cultural practice.

<sup>98</sup> The term ‘*Buluo* Council’ refers to the meeting which is established according to the Council of indigenous peoples’ formally announced Directions for the Establishment of Tribal Councils. Again, I use the term *Buluo* instead of using the word ‘tribe’ that suggests the stereotype of primitiveness.

social organisations, mechanisms to discuss public affairs have been reduced. Some communities may have preserved the forms of *buluo* meetings due to their specific background, whereas collectivism may have declined among other communities.

In recent years, more and more *Buluo* Councils have been established and they have become the most practical step toward the goal of self-determination for indigenous people. Currently, the state is encouraging indigenous people to establish *Buluo* Councils as a preparatory step before the formal establishment of the Indigenous Peoples Self-Government Act. In this way, *Buluo* Councils should have been ranked as public juristic persons at the level of law.

The year during which I completed fieldwork happened to be the year that the amended Indigenous Peoples Basic Law<sup>99</sup> was announced. I also had opportunities to take part and observe the organising process of Ulay *Buluo* Council, while other informants shared their stories of organising *buluo* meetings. These endeavours reflect the contemporary circumstances of indigenous people and how they fight for autonomy.

According to my observations, drinking may have been part of the embodied practice of organising *buluo* meetings, whereas some communities would regulate the use of alcohol through *buluo* meetings. Various attitudes toward drinking have emerged based on different contexts, but all reveal attempts at self-determination.

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<sup>99</sup> According to The Indigenous Peoples Basic Law Article 2-1, 'In order to promote independent development of indigenous tribe at its will, the tribe should establish a Tribal Council. The tribe which is ratified by the central authority in charge of indigenous affairs shall be considered a public juristic person.' (Retracted from <https://law.moj.gov.tw/ENG/LawClass/LawAll.aspx?pcode=D0130003> on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2020)



### 7.5.1 The Situation in Ulay

In Chapter 6.1.3 I mentioned the eviction of vendors in Wufeng and the family of Mrs A who had been affected by alcohol in the midst of personal issues. The last time I met Mrs A during my fieldwork was at the end of June 2018, after the preparatory meeting of the Ulay *Buluo* Council. She prepared food for the villagers and told me that her daughter had been hospitalised again. Her son, Mr C, who is always drunk, did not attend the meeting, but still appeared outside a '*plahan*' (Atayal house used to set the fire and gather the people), handing a cigarette to Laling and lighting his own.

The eviction of vendors reveals the conflict between the state's bureaucracy and the autonomy of local *buluo* society. At the end of June 2018, the Ulay people held a preparatory meeting for two purposes: the first to ensure the border of their traditional territory and the second to propose the establishment of their *Buluo* Council. Before the meeting, Laling and his companions took invitations from door to door, making sure all villagers had received the meeting notice and agenda. On that day, Ulay people gathered in the classroom of Taoshan Primary School. Some people gathered in the pavilion to have a cup of Paolyta before the meeting. The villagers slaughtered a pig and prepared food to share after the meeting, which they ate with beer (Figure 7. 20). With the merry atmosphere it was as if the *buluo* were managing a festival, but on a relatively small scale.

In the case of Ulay *Buluo* Council, people use alcohol to enhance the atmosphere of the meeting. However, compared to festive activities, they do not drink explicitly but maintain a relatively solemn mood. These similar scenes of drinking practices in other *buluo* meetings are sporadically seen and recorded. Some informants told me that they need a drink before speaking, because indigenous people do not speak their

mind freely in those formal occasions settings, other than during certain rituals. Take another village's post-Morakot typhoon reconstruction, for example, and a study that quotes a community leader:

*'In the past, we engaged in conversations and communal drinking at "tribal dialogues." After a few drinks, things tended to work themselves out. Nowadays, we modernized 'tribal dialogues' as 'tribal meetings,' whose resolutions are presented as official tribal consensuses to the Council for Indigenous Peoples.'*  
(Lo and Fan 2020:39)

Like the aforementioned Chu-lin Hua-yuan joint *Pslkawtas* (see Chapter 5.2.2), the villagers started to discuss public affairs in a tipsy mood that enabled everyone to talk freely. People may use alcohol as a mediator in a way, but also like an adhesive to enhance unity. To some extent, indigenous people who have drinking traditions during rituals may be accustomed to the mental and physical feeling induced by alcohol and enter a specific mood for better communication. In other words, they use alcohol to create an atmosphere similar to the liminal phase of the rituals.

However, not every Ulay villager understands the purpose and function of the *Buluo* Council. The villagers still had incongruent expectations of the meeting. A legislative assistant<sup>100</sup> was invited to attend the meeting to explain the function of the *Buluo* Council using the example of *Dowmung buluo* in Hualien: 'after they announced the traditional territory, they would be capable of negotiating with the Asia Cement Corporation.' However, the various political inclinations of the villagers result in little trust in the leadership of the meeting. On the day of the meeting, the *Buluo* Council could not be established since there were not enough attendees. The

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<sup>100</sup> A legislative assistant is a publicly funded staffer who works for a Member of the Legislative Yuan.

incongruent attitudes toward the leadership of the meeting also resulted in the untrustworthiness among the community. There ought to be repetitive conversations and negotiations in search of the common purposes and benefit for the communities before the establishment of *Buluo* Council.<sup>101</sup>



Figure 7. 20 People prepare pork before the preparatory meeting of the Ulay *Buluo* Council. After the meeting, people ate together in a ‘*plahan*’.

### 7.5.2 The boundaries

Even though drinking may have become a popular practice in *buluo* meetings, I am not suggesting that alcohol use is necessary for all the *buluo* in Taiwan. Each *buluo* proposes resolutions to drinking issues in different ways. The point is that the values of drinking have been determined collectively despite the decisions being made diversely based on the various contexts. Moreover, *buluo* meetings may set boundaries that distinguish the collective values and constraints. For instance, in 2019 a young Amis man from Langas *buluo* in Hualien County was caught drunk driving after the *ilisin* (the harvest festival). Langas *Buluo* Council then condemned the police and decided to protest at the police station. However, not all the *Buluo* Councils tolerate drinking like this. In recent years, as in Kalibuan’s alcohol-free movement (see Chapter 7.2), more and more communities have proposed measures of moderate

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<sup>101</sup> The Ulay Tribal Council was eventually established on 24<sup>th</sup> August 2018.

drinking since they have perceived alcohol's negative influences. However, unlike government-led health intervention projects, the *Buluo* Council's mechanisms are more rights-based so villagers can take part and express themselves democratically.

Among the cases of those well-organised *buluo* meetings, the meeting in Smangus is noteworthy for its organisation of 'common ownership', which has attracted academic attention. During my fieldwork, I visited Smangus by following the Institute of Anthropology of Tsing-Hua University's field trip and listened to the secretary of the Smangus *Buluo* Council, Lahuy Icyeh's briefing. Smangus is next to Cinsbu, where I tried to find 'Alcohol Reserved for the Highlands' (see Chapter 4.5.2). In 1980 the village gained its electric power supply, and in 1995 there were roads built to connect it to other places. Being the last *buluo* to contact civilisation in Taiwan, Smangus had even been called the 'dark *buluo*'. However, both Cinsbu and Smangus are famous for their natural forests that attract considerable tourism, which resulted in a scramble for resources. Since 2001, Smangus started to have the idea of common ownership. Smangus people established their *buluo* meeting in 2004 and called it '*Tnunan*', which means 'weaving', a core Atayal cultural practice. Through the discussion in *Tnunan*, Smangus people decided to share land and property and manage tourism together. The Smangus Cooperavtive Model has eradicated unemployment and poverty and the community has very strict regulations on drinking. I asked Lahuy for details on the measures they take on alcohol use, and below is his reply:

*'We don't sell alcohol from the outside but only sell our home made millet wine and peach wine. People cannot drink when they are working. The Tnunan has made the decision to reduce the salary of the villagers who have been caught drinking while working, and employees' end of year bonuses will be halved.'*

Smangus's measures of alcohol control reveal a clear boundary between the insiders and the outsiders, and also between labour and rest. They sanctify bodies engaged in labour to ensure their productivity. Currently in Smangus, 80% of the residents have joined the 'common ownership' system and earn the same salary while running all accommodation together. Its policy of 'common ownership' set an example of self-determination which is difficult to replicate.

### **7.5.3 The paradox**

Listening to Lahuy's briefing, I was reminded that in the IDS conference that I attended few months ago the Smangus community leader, Masay Sulung, was invited to share his opinions about the healthcare policy (See Chapter 3.3.2). He proudly said 'If you want to have a drink in our *buluo*, please bring the drinks on your own.' His words actually demonstrate the dispute against outsiders' misunderstandings of indigenous people's health as affected by alcohol. However, ironically, he only expressed his gratitude to the government in the conference without mentioning how Smangus had become the model community by way of self-reliance.

If we consider drinking a result of colonisation, the establishment of *buluo* meetings should be a practice of decolonisation. The listed cases of *buluo* meetings show various collective attitudes toward alcohol use, which depend on how *buluo* societies perceive critical issues of their own. Drinking practices sometimes play critical roles in the formation of sociality. However, when *buluo* societies perceive negative impacts, they limit alcohol use through *buluo* meetings. The common theme among those various attitudes is the shared will to dominate public affairs and establish the solidarity of the people. *Buluo* meetings also create the possibility for

indigenous people to make decisions, including managing issues related to alcohol use, in a collective and democratic manner.

*Buluo* societies did not lack communication platforms before the establishment of the *Buluo* Councils. However, these platforms have declined along with the population outflow, while modern bureaucracy has mostly taken the place of traditional community organisations. With the awakening of their sense of the right to self-determination, local communications have been reactivated. However, *Buluo* Councils have been legally recognised as public juristic persons according to the law in Taiwan. On the premise of the implementation of transitional justice, it is still paradoxical for the state to supervise the establishment of *Buluo* Councils. Whether *Buluo* Councils facilitate the realisation of the ultimate goal of self-government remains to be seen.

## 7.6 Conclusion

This chapter highlights the ways that indigenous people's resilience manifests in a collective action of symbolic sobriety. Although I hold aloft the notion of sobriety, I am not proposing any appropriate solution regarding indigenous people's drinking issues. There has been discussion over whether intervention into drinking and smoking should target indigenous people; scholars have suggested that the interventions should be designed in culturally recognisable ways and using community-based long-term approaches (Brady 2007; Doran et al. 2010; Gould et al. 2013; Minichiello et al. 2015). However, for Taiwanese indigenous people, the dynamic values of drinking culture have rendered it challenging to target interventions at drinking alone. But the more critical reason that interventions are hard

to conduct may be due to the resistance that has emerged from a long-term colonial situation and distrust of the state.

Even though the slogan 'Rediscover the selves' from government-led projects may be somewhat shallow, that purport can be seen in these vignettes. For instance, in the cases of the AVA and Kalibuan *Buluo*, the religious faith and support from the churches can transfer the stigma. Nevertheless, it is the social inequality enhanced by disasters and the development of the country that plays the key role in triggering change. In Takanua, Namasia, Kanakanavu and Bunun people organise wine-making sessions as part of their Culture-Health Station programmes after the flood. In Hsinchu City, urban indigenous residents set up organic farming in a gesture to break up the stereotypes surrounding health.

The history of indigenous people is a history of oppression, as well as resistance. Unlike the bloody conflicts of the Japanese colonial period, indigenous movements in Taiwan during the KMT single-party autocracy mainly sought to win respect from the majority ethnic group and the government. Resistance exists in all the examples described in this chapter. Unlike those dramatic and visible forms, subaltern groups may show their everyday resistance through certain behaviours which are even more passive, tacit and invisible (Scott 1985, 1989, 1990). From post-disaster community-based grassroots work in the mountains to the community assistant agriculture on the city riverside, from the local community based alcohol-free movement to the establishment of *buluo* councils, these practices show attempts to take back the subjectivities from the marginalised situation. There has been a more profound reflective sentiment in every effort, which shows the vulnerable groups' aggressiveness to take back the authority to interpret these practices, and whether or not to drink. Hence, I highlight the establishment of the *Buluo* Council in Wufeng as

the final piece of the jigsaw, which demonstrates the indigenous people's collective search for autonomy.



## 8. Conclusion

### 8.1 Routing Drinking Cultures

Today, Taiwanese indigenous people's drinking practices are a mixture of old and new, sacred and secular, bitterness and happiness, self-harm and the struggle to survive. From the life experiences of those who work – in forestry, ocean fishery and urban construction – displacement is a common issue for indigenous people. However, no matter how far they move, they finally settle within the same border and share a cosmopolitan lifeworld. Their drinking cultures alter along with the specific routing trajectories within the island, and leave an ontological question to which it is difficult to apply health narratives.

#### 8.1.1 Missing and met

My research originates from my experience in Wufeng, an indigenous township where I took part in an intervention project. Feeling satisfied with my knowledge of local society, I started my study in anthropology. When I returned to Wufeng to start my fieldwork, I gradually realised that local drinking practices are not derived from the local. I also noticed that there was a large elderly population. I also felt a bit lost given that most young adults were absent from the *buluo* villages, that I could not understand the real life of Atayal people if I stayed in the mountains.

Here, I borrow the notion of 'missing and met' proposed by Andrew Russell, who describes his fieldwork in Nepal where a large population had migrated out of the village:

‘I needed to move beyond the village to study the Nepali diaspora (of which the Yakha are a part), to venture out to the periphery from the cultural “heartland” in order to expand the ethnographic map through a tour that turned some of these “missing” into “met”.’ (Russell 2000:88)

The theme of ‘missing and met’ was present throughout my fieldwork after I scaled out my study to be multi-sited. There was the missing of the traditional made millet wine but meeting newly invented cocktails; missing the declining rituals in the mountains but meeting the festivals on the riverside of the city; missing the elderly people’s chanting but meeting young migrants’ love songs; missing the drinkers who were isolated or even lost their lives but meeting family members who survived similar desperate situations. Also, indigenous people experience this idea of ‘missing and met’ every day. For example, the old Atayal man who got drunk and burned down his house was sent to AVA and became a member of the new community (see Chapter 7.1.4) and the Amis workers left their home village in Hualien and reunited in Hinchu City (See Chapter 6.3.3).

Indigenous people’s moving paths are far more extensive in area than I, or most general populations in Taiwan, had imagined. The complicated routing trajectories and various life stories have woven a picture of drinking practices in colourful profusion. During my fieldwork, many times I heard indigenous elites and some health practitioners use the term ‘good drinking culture’ to support the authentic indigeneity of drinking. To defy the stigma, indigenous people may use an argument presuming a culturally acceptable drinking pattern. However, based on my study, I suggest we need to break the preconceived authentic indigeneity regarding drinking.

Indigeneity is a highly complex notion inherited through ancestry, cultural tradition and political circumstances (Trigger and Dalley 2010). On the subject of the character of indigenous people's 'drinking culture', Clifford's (1996, 1997) notion of 'roots and routes' is relevant since indigenous culture is being shaped and transformed through history, either aggressively or passively. The plurality of cultural practices is based on the various experiences such as diaspora and cosmopolitanism, while contemporary indigeneity is re-rooted through multiple routes (Clifford 2007; Forte 2010). Clifford (1997:253) points out the following:

'All communities, even the most locally rooted, maintain structured travel circuits, linking members "at home" and "away." Under changing conditions of mass communication, globalization, postcolonialism, and neocolonialism, the circuits are selectively restructured and rerouted according to internal and external dynamics. Within the diverse array of contemporary diasporic cultural forms, tribal displacements and networks are distinctive.'

This extract answers a question that emerged during my early encounters with indigenous people when I was taking part in the *jiejiu* project as a medical doctor in Wufeng. I received a leaflet about the '*Jiejiu* Covenants' drafted by local medical practitioners under the government's Community Health Promotion Program which stated 'I understand our culture of drinking and proclaim its value to ensure the health of our next generation.' I was confused by the ambiguous culture and value of alcohol use (Wu 2019). However, my multi-sited ethnography has illustrated some of diverse trajectories of cultural change and has better captured the multiple meanings of drinking practices today.

### 8.1.2 Displacement, replacement and emplacement

Indigenous people's lifestyles are no longer exotic for the general population in Taiwan but have been shaped through their experiences of displacement, replacement and emplacement. This study's research objects are people on the move and things that are ever-changing. Indigenous people may dwell in the so-called '*buluo*', but those *buluo* are not isolated and culturally dependent. Indigenous people's collective migrations have taken place under historical colonial power and contemporary state capitalism. Indigenous people in Taiwan live in situations of high geographical mobility. For example, when I went to Orchid Island, an Atayal pastor from Wufeng happened to be there to take part in his classmate's retirement ceremony. Indigenous people's moving routes have changed due to colonialism, modernisation and new labour processes. Today, indigenous people are moving around Taiwan and meeting people from other ethnic groups every day.

To some extent, that experience of displacement can be appropriated by using the discourse of diaspora, since it is related to what Clifford (1997:249) describes as 'decolonization, increased immigration, global communications, and transport—a whole range of phenomena that encourage multilocal attachment, dwelling, and travelling within and across nations.' However, Clifford also reminds us that diaspora is different from travel since it is not temporary (ibid. 250-1). While living away from home villages, indigenous people are busy travelling back and forth throughout their lifetimes. As much as roots, indigenous identity is built around narratives of migration, or routes.

On intersubjective reflection, displacement also refers to the difficulty of bringing psychiatric knowledge to indigenous societies. However, one cannot be so

naïve as to expect that there is definitely a traditional cultural practice with its protective functions (such as those rituals) since traditional culture is still declining and waiting to be revitalised. The ever-changing, emerging and transforming drinking practices reveal the emplacement of indigenous groups who have been moving around and staying with other groups.

Scholars have underlined that the notion of ‘emplacement’ describes migrants and displaced newcomers who develop new forms of sociability once situated in cosmopolitan urban societies (Schiller, Darieva, and Gruner-Domic 2011; Schiller and Çağlar 2015; Wessendorf and Phillimore 2019). As my informants told me, ‘drinking is merely showing hospitality,’ which makes sense of alcohol’s role as a social lubricant to some extent. However, there needs to be a more subtle, paradoxical and dynamic understanding of indigenous people’s ‘emplacement’, which better encompasses and represents the ambivalent, multi-level meanings of drinking.

That emplacement is not just people putting themselves where they choose to stay; it is a passive phase of action because indigenous people have nowhere else to go. I met quite a lot of people who went far way to work but eventually, penniless and frustrated, returned to their home villages and never chose to leave again. Mr C in Ulay is one such example (See Chapter 6.1.3 and 7.6): he always gets drunk at karaoke, which is the most distant place away from his home in his daily life. However, his neighbours may travel regularly back and forth to the mountain since they actually live out of Wufeng. There are lifeworlds of significant disparity: some people can move freely, while others remain fixed.

It is a bumpy road for indigenous people moving from displacement to emplacement. It results in a complicated indigeneity that reflects their complex relationships with all other groups. Indigenous people then appear to cultivate

identities that are historical, relational and dialectal. According to this study, drinking can be a treatment for suffering that results from being forced to migrate to the marginal spaces on the island, though they might choose to move to find a better life and to live more comfortably. To some extent, drinking practices constitute an embodied resistance to show emotion, whether distress, merriment or anger. Indigenous people use drinking practices as a visible and felt action through which to establish and manage a vanishing identity.

From an essential practice of sociality to a gesture of resistance, drinking is the root of indigenous people's culture and their route to survival in a cosmopolitan world. With more encounters with other ethnic groups and structural pressures, the role of alcohol becomes more perplexing. Sometimes indigenous people drink more exaggeratedly, as a demonstration of hospitality, but also as a way of showing hostility. This is why I present the following argument that what really matters is not drinking itself, but the meaning of 'betweenness' that emerges from how it is practised.

## **8.2 The Betweenness**

As mentioned in the introductory chapter, this thesis set out to rethink how individualised health interventions miss targeting the common situation of indigenous people. The multi-sited ethnography captures how those ethnic minority people who have experienced colonial process may feel, see, talk about and act out regarding drinking in different contexts. Through writing about drinking practices in a series of vignettes, these stories comprise a more holistic picture of indigenous people's alcohol use that can enhance the blind spots of health narratives. I am not going to anchor the meaning of drinking at any point with any concrete definition. On the

contrary, this thesis aims at exploring the ‘betweenness’ of drinking practice. It is the ‘betweenness’ that needs interpretation rather than drinking itself. This study aims to explore the dialectal and dynamic relationship between the stark binaries such as secular and profane, drinking and not drinking, old and new and natural and unnatural, regarding Taiwanese indigenous people’s contemporary life situations. I will elaborate the betweenness in the two ways explained below.

### **8.2.1 Entangled emotions**

Drinking is an emotional practice. Overing and Passes (2000) indicate that attitudes and affections are mutually implicated. They argue that looking at ‘the relation of aesthetics to virtues and affective life’ in indigenous societies is a crucial pathway to knowing ‘indigenous social ethics, and “everyday” sociality, conviviality and practice’ (ibid. 8). Reactions such as happiness, sadness or even anger and any other intense emotions that lead to violence cannot be interpreted as mere pathological reactions but must be understood in a wider context. Drinking is not merely an affectionless ‘behaviour’. It is practised within various emotional contexts, which encompass contrasting moods. This reflects the notion of betweenness again. Some of the emotions I witnessed during my fieldwork were a reaction to everyday difficulties; some of them led to what might be interpreted psychologically as sporadic acting out, like severe conflicts, physical assault and even suicide. Anger was sometimes channelled into more organised actions, like street rallies.

Atayal people may drink when they feel ‘heart hurt’ (*mohaal inlungan*) but also when they try to be bold in protest against the authorities. Saisyat people mourn during the ritual *PaSta’ay* but shout around the arena of the ceremony. Urban indigenous groups drink merrily but sing sad songs at the same time. Tao people drink

with tourists to show their hospitality but also to show their rage toward nuclear waste. Drinking practices enhance their entangled emotions, which are not pure but knotted feelings about their complicated circumstances.

Furthermore, the intertwined emotions related to drinking practices cannot be seen as personal affection but should be interpreted under the mindset of what Scheper-Hughes and Lock (1987:28) argue to be the variable mindful bodies as part of a 'mediatrix' that encompasses individual, social and political meanings. There are bodies that endure the pain of labour but also sweat in the ritual dance circles, while some bodies fall down in streets but also protest on the roads. Drinking practices not only reveal personal feelings but also reflect the sociality and connectivity among the indigenous groups, who show particular collective manners regarding the dynamic values of alcohol use.

### **8.2.2 Liminality**

In the past, indigenous people would only survive their clans in the natural environment; nowadays, the indigenous groups struggle to take back sovereignty after suffering from oppression and dispossession by the colonisers and the modern state. Taiwanese indigenous people now face a dilemma in building up self-identity embedded in loyalty to their country. There is ongoing anxiety and fear from assimilation and appeals to inclusive unity. In this sense, all those rituals, whether sacred or secular, religious or non-religious, wet or dry, in a trance or lucid consciousness, are set to bring people into a liminal phase (Turner 1977) of reflections on their current circumstances.

Turner (ibid.) indicates that there are various forms of expressing liminality in post-tribal societies, of which leisure activities and plays are typical kinds of them. He



also addresses ‘flow’ and ‘communitas’ as major characteristics of liminality. Flow is the holistic sensation present when people act with total involvement, while communitas refers to an unstructured community in which people are equal and commonly achieve a kind of spiritual state. These phenomena can be observed in indigenous communities, whether during traditional rituals or in those everyday entertaining activities. We see how boundaries of social classes – particularly social distance as a result of capitalism – are suddenly removed during the rituals.

Although this study finds, in terms of drinking, some indigenous people may deliberately pursue a state of trance, and otherwise try to maintain sobriety, there is still connectivity between the different practices that indigenous people engage in. It is a practice to enhance the sense of presence, and rivalry with marginalisation. It is a sense of being visible, audible, sensible and understandable. In other words, indigenous people restore their sense of identity and subjectivity through drinking practices. Drinking is a sort of embodied resistance against their collective destiny of being colonised and oppressed. From this point, drinking practices which reveal indigenous people’s complexity and collectivism contradict the logic of individualised health narratives to problematise drinking and result in the conundrums of health interventions.

Turner (1979:465) explains that ‘liminality’ means ‘a state or process which is betwixt-and-between the normal’, so that ‘anything might, even should, happen.’ Given the aforementioned notion of ‘staged authenticity’ according to which cultural practices can be understood as sort of performance, which coincidentally echoes Turner’s metaphor of ritual and theatre (Turner 1982), he claims that the use of ‘liminal’ is ‘not in the “primary” or “literal” sense advocated by van Gennep’ but means to be ‘metaphorical’ and is helpful to think about global human society (ibid.

45), so that liminality exists in a 'hall of mirrors' to bring up multiple reflections. (ibid. 105). The idea is useful to explain those unclear, perplexing or sometimes paradoxical values reflected by drinking practices.

### **8.3 Alcohol as negative capital**

Aware that I was researching drinking, my informants' asking me to 'write it conversely' (see Chapter 1.4.2) reveals a collective will to dispute their public image. However, there are still many examples of how people bear the stigma of 'drinker' or 'ex-drinker' and adopt sober lives, or exploit the stereotypes of drinking as a kind of resistance, as I have mentioned in my ethnography. Here, I indicate that alcohol use can be seen as symbolic capital of negativity that indigenous people take drinking as a way of self-fashioning to rebuild the identity and tackle the predicaments. I adapt the notion of 'negative capital' extended from my Bourdieusian theoretical basis to explain how indigenous people deal with the negative values of drinking.

#### **8.3.1 Symbolic capital of negativity**

If it is necessary to emphasise the structural violence that is imposed on indigenous people when talking about the colonial situations, drinking is 'symbolic violence', a term which scholars use to describe the unconsciously accepted status quo (Eagleton and Bourdieu 1992; Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992). Like Pine (2008) using the same notion to talk about Honduran workers' embodied obsession as acceptance of violent forms of modernity and capitalism, Taiwanese indigenous people may have positioned themselves within the structure of society that unconsciously legitimises their oppression. However, it does not mean that indigenous people take it for granted to be victimised. The ways of indigenous people's

self-stigmatisation or anti-heroic like attitude reveal their collective mindset of resistance. In this subchapter, I indicate the symbolic capital of negativity to stress the stigmatised group's intentionality of rebuilding their identity and converting the stigma.

Although Bourdieu himself did not directly mention the term negative capital, social scientists use the term to explain the symbolic transformation of cultural capital which is 'recognised as negative, [and] is potent because of its anti-social, stigmatised or even illegal status' (Barker 2013: 361). Korean Sociologist Hong-Jung Kim (2017) uses the example of Paul the Apostle, the biblical figure who turned his illness and crime into honour, to explain how the values of binary opposition are loosened. Kim (ibid.) points out that negative capital is not merely a social term but also connotes psychosocial senses which can be expressed syntactically and semantically. For example, Barker (2013:370-371) uses the concept of negative capital to explain the logic of homeless young Australians' investing in the negative cultural capital that reinforces their position in the broader social world by maintaining their 'self-destructive patterns of behaviour'. Another example is Moran's (2015) study of 'symbolic ethnic capital' among young Sudanese refugees who perform hip hop music to represent their identities in an Australian multicultural context. They use the terms of 'the hood' and 'the ghetto' and hip hop references to the disadvantaged life experience of 'poverty, crime, power and toughness' (ibid. 716). This is similar to Taiwanese indigenous people's drinking, since drinking is so devalued and indigenous people have nothing in their hands to fight back with. They then seek a way out by 'working through' the negativity of drinking.

### **8.3.2 Toward symbolic sobriety**

According to my observations, particularly from the description of how indigenous people deal with the stereotype and stigma in Chapter 4, even if the negative values of alcohol use are generally affirmed, indigenous people respond to alcohol use in various ways and with different attitudes. Nevertheless, it does not mean indigenous people hold controversial values regarding drinking practices. There must be a shared meaning between abstinence and binge drinking. Indigenous people bear their stigma as a collective destiny, and they are trying to live out their lives in an insightful manner that I call ‘symbolic sobriety’ (mentioned in Chapter 7), which shows autonomy to determine their own lives.

In Chapter 1.4.2, I mentioned one of the indigenous representatives in the Central Advisory Council in the Council of Indigenous Peoples who claimed that a special gene contributes to indigenous people’s ‘good drinking culture’. Also, more than one informant asked me to write up the thesis ‘conversly’ after learning I intended to research the issue. These sayings and reactions imply that indigenous people have had enough advice and admonishment regarding the disadvantages of alcohol, particularly via health-promoting jargon from psychoeducation sessions. Hence, indigenous people seek a kind of ‘symbolic sobriety’ by avoiding health narratives. They brush aside those health education notes but drink deliberately as if in a kind of rebellion. They may either keep drinking with self-deprecation or accept the stigma of alcoholism but rebel in an even more radical way. In a nutshell, these practices, whether to drink or not, all reflect alcohol as ‘negative capital’.

In my preliminary research in Wufeng, I borrowed the notion of ‘tall poppy syndrome’ from McKnight's (2002) study of indigenous people in Australia, that

those who seek change can be disliked in their communities because they are seen as pretending to be morally superior. That might be the reason why heavy drinkers in contemporary indigenous society may be accepted by their communities (Wu 2019). However, there should be more subtle psychological mechanisms, that such denial to change should be interpreted through Freud's (1925) notion of 'negation' that 'the content of a repressed image or idea can make its way into consciousness, on condition that it is negated.' Unlike repression, negation can be seen as a defence mechanism that is more flexible but still allows thought content to appear in one's consciousness. In a report to recommend skills of psychoanalysis, Freud (1914) wrote:

'The greater the resistance, the more thoroughly remembering will be replaced by acting out (repetition)....he repeats everything deriving from the repressed element within himself that has already established itself in his manifest personality.'

What Freud means is that an individual's will can be unconsciously replaced by actions that may be against his or her desire. This partially explains why indigenous people appear to be self-degraded to maintain the roles of drinkers. The anti-heroic behaviour such as binge drinking reflects indigenous people's internal struggle to accept the negative role models. However, sometimes this unwillingness may be converted to motivation.

Kim (2017) makes links between Bourdieu's concept of symbolic capital and the Freudian theory of the psychological process by suggesting that unconscious desire may be transformed into symbolic desire. The AVA brothers accept the stigma of alcoholism and choose to live a puritan lifestyle in the deep mountains in Wufeng.

They are not totally disconnected from alcohol because the label of alcoholism is deeply imprinted in their life experience as part of their selfhood. This represents what Mitchell (2004) describes in Aztec drinking as ‘intoxicated identities’, where risk-taking drinking can be rationalised in a desperate situation. However, that kind of self-labelling can be transformed, which can be seen in how Hansen (2018) describes Puerto Rican drug users’ re-evaluation and identity change via Pentecostal practices. The stigma of being an ex-addict is the symbolic capital for them to cope with future life. There is similar logic for those indigenous communities who spontaneously seek abstinence or, elsewhere, to binge drink. Indigenous people have tried to tackle the negative value of drinking in many ways, whether they choose to stop drinking as when the residents of Kalibuan put a billboard about the alcohol-free movement at the entrance to their village, or to do it reversely like Makotaay young men pouring rice wine into their mouths.

Moreover, in the aforementioned chapters, some wine-making experiments show the practices beyond everyday life. Also, through the whole text of this thesis, I embed several songs and poems within the ethnographic vignettes. Negative capital can also be seen in literary texts and even performing arts, like those pieces of songs and poems that contain the words of self-recreation, such as *I love you, Baimijiu* (See Chapter 4.1.2).

In May 2018, an exhibition titled ‘Dispossessions: Performative Encounter(s) of Taiwanese Indigenous Contemporary Art’, which demonstrated alcohol as both part of rituals and a health issue in Taiwanese indigenous groups, took place at Goldsmiths, University of London. According to the curator, Biung Ismahasan, the exhibition ‘vindicates the allegedly genetic explanation of Taiwanese Indigenous drinking problem as a counter-narrative to defy the consistent slander and degradation by

non-Indigenous authorities and peoples' (Figueira 2020:81). In that performance, the indigenous performers played the pipes and danced in an area surrounded by the bamboo-weaved fences that mimic a double-helix shape. Performance art like this has emerged in recent years as young indigenous artists have become more confident in showing their identities.

Given Taiwanese indigenous people's everyday life experience, those chaotic, intoxicated, displaced life experiences become symbolic capital as kind of self-reference to enhance their own self-awareness of their situations. Drinking thereby becomes a symbol of their suffering under structural violence, while narratives of drinking practices reverse some of the negative stereotypes and create the possibility of intensifying senses of identity and solidarity.

## **8.4 Unhealthy Others**

In terms of health narratives and interventions, it could be problematic to avoid problematising alcohol use without victimising the drinkers. In this study, I also make the point that indigenous people try to live soberly through methods other than those used in health interventions. This is because indigenous people have profound resistance to the mindset of 'otherness' in regard to victimhood.

### **8.4.1 Victimhood**

There are two points related to victimhood. First, indigenous people's victimhood does not merely originate from natural disasters and historical trauma, but also from long term colonisation which has endured into today's mistreatment by the state. Second, the government continues to pathologise this victimhood, regardless of its awareness of the state's role as victimiser. The discourse of victimhood can be

bogged down in the narrator's role confusion. In fact, both over-victimising and pathologising indigenous people's situations may once again weaken their aspirational subjectivity. This paradox of intervention reveals the difficulty of interventions based on an imagined 'unhealthy other'. In regard to health governance, Dr Chin-ju Lin has done long term fieldwork in Namasia District. She points out the notion of 'the unhealthy others' that has been applied to health interventions targeting indigenous people who live in a post-disaster state:

'While resettled in the camp and the temples, indigenous people often put rice wine in the plastic bottles and take them to the sites where they have been relocated. Smuggling drinks to the shelters has become a specific common memory of their post-disaster life. I have mentioned that indigenous people support each other during the state of acute stress through the form of "commensality"; however, once they were resettled in the plain area, they would have even more scruples and secrets because of the imaginary stigma that religious groups and health promotion projects have imposed on them.' (Lin 2018:70)

The 'otherness' of disaster victims can be explained in various ways. Bankoff (2001) criticises how the Western narratives of hazards and disaster used by 'us' picture an unsafe world that stresses the danger to 'them'. Hsu, Howitt and Miller (2015:310-311) remind us of the specificity of the 'post-colonial' characters of Taiwan history, which give post-disaster recovery and reconstruction 'procedural vulnerability', shown in the relocation and housing policies, which leads those good intentions to fail.



Whether in the alcohol-free movement led by the church in Kalibuan, or the Women's Farm in Takanua, actions on a smaller scale by community-based organisations mean it is possible to ensure the solidarity of a community and reclaim autonomy to reconstruct its homeland. To highlight those examples is not to devalue any therapeutic or rehabilitation model or to idealise the other. Nevertheless, these attempts may have changed the landscape of care, and they continuously cultivate the possibility of life by mixing tradition with new imaginations and techniques.

Researchers have found that hazards related to natural disasters are in turn related to inequality of social status (Chang and Lin 2012; Reid 2013; Tierney 2014), echoing what O'Keefe, Westgate and Wisner (1976) have pointed out, that natural disasters are more a consequence of socioeconomic situations than purely natural factors. Studies have also found that short-sighted top-down policies of reconstruction may replicate past colonial legacies of dominance and result in the destruction of local communities' social networks (Li and Lin 2013; Hsu, Howitt, and Miller 2015). These studies reminds us that interventions cannot be carried out straightforwardly by targeting a wound caused by the one who offers to help, like the interventions and health governance that Taiwanese indigenous people face today. And, in fact, that's where the concerns of stigma come from, and how drinking issues become so sensitive.

There are two influences that contribute to the government continuously carrying out interventions. First, the 'scientific' evidence (Yang, Ko, and Wen 1996; Wang et al. 2014) and, second, the previous *jiejiu* projects that were thought to be successful (e.g. The Love of Maya). However, interventions based on an imagined moral and behavioural deficit have been continuously applied to indigenous people. These projects have repeatedly adopted methods of individualised health governance that

reinforce this negative moral judgement, which underpins the effects of stigmatisation. Thus, indigenous people have an even more vulnerable status due to two forces: one is 'othering' the traumatic experiences and the other is catastrophising their everyday life.

Erving Goffman's (1963:3) explanation of stigma may help us reflect on this condition, where 'stigma' is used to refer to 'an attribute that is deeply discrediting'; Goffman further adds, 'It should be seen that a language of relationships, not attributes, is really needed. An attribute that stigmatizes one type of possessor can confirm the usualness of another, and therefore is neither credible nor discreditable as a thing in itself'. Indigenous people's drinking practices, which have been seen as a stigmatised group having its problematised problems, are not only subjective in terms of being culturally constructed but more in their relation to power (Ortner 2006), particularly when they are taken as the 'colonised "other"' (Good et al. 2008:2). What really matters is understanding the power-relationships that the indigenous groups have been facing, which is reflected by drinking rather than merely focusing on drinking itself.

David Napier (1992:139-199) describes culture as self, pointing out that there are the characteristics of 'against otherness and fear of the foreign' within the millennial climate. His innovative interpretation (Napier 2013) of the mechanism of human immunity, which sees pathogens as former selves instead of foreign bodies, inspired me to understand alcohol use. Current health governance portrays indigenous people as 'unhealthy others' whose behaviours and thoughts must be corrected. Furthermore, the alcohol used by indigenous people today has been seen as a hazardous foreign substance introduced by outsiders.

The slogan ‘Rediscover the selves’ that the Taiwanese government uses to promote health may have presumed that indigenous peoples lack autonomy. The narratives of alterity regarding drinking, from the material to the social level, drag indigenous people into a vicious circle of stigmatisation, marginalisation and loss of subjectivity. To think outside the box, we should turn the focus from the ‘other’ to ‘us’.

#### **8.4.2 No one is an outsider**

During my fieldwork, there was a popular slogan used to promote indigenous people’s rights in Taiwan: ‘No one is an outsider’(沒有人是局外人). To diminish the problem of the ‘otherness’ of health narratives, I borrow that slogan, as shouted by indigenous activists, to complete my argument. My study was inspired by my previous experience of medical practice in an indigenous township and it then shifted to a general understanding of indigenous people’s drinking practices as related to their collective historical destinies and contemporary living situations. After stepping back from the frontline of medical practice, I have critiqued and reflected on what those health interventions have done. This is problematic, partly because people who are involved in those projects might think they are humanists doing something good, while I argue that the professionals’ toolkits may be the products of colonial rationality and miss what really matters for indigenous people.

I have methodologically adapted the intersubjective approach as a way to understand indigenous people’s current circumstances, which are no longer exotically situated but more engaged with contemporary governmentality. Indigenous people’s everyday life is a struggle against power imposed on them (although they react to this

power in different and even opposite ways). In this case, the researcher should be aware of no longer being a naïve observer, but a proxy of the power of authority.

My research approach is a self-reflective gesture. The ‘No-one is an outsider’ slogan once again distracts from the fact that indigenous people are actually living in territories with blurred borders. Everyone living under the current regime shares responsibility for what indigenous people face. Moreover, the destinies of local lives are always linked to global scenarios. These include relationships among the WTO, wine fraud and AVA, US military aid, industrial development, Paolyta and even the biotech business, deforestation and gangsters.

Let’s return to the slogan ‘No One is an Outsider’, which shows double meanings that both demand inclusivity and repel exclusivity. This quote originated from indigenous singer Panai Kusui’s song, ‘As It Used to Be’(原來的樣子).<sup>102</sup> Later, it was shouted by indigenous groups and eco-activists’ in the ‘Oppose Meiliwan’ movement, the battle against a luxury private resort village, a five-star beachside property development at Shanyuan (杉原), an indigenous seaside village in Taitung. It was then adapted for many protests related to indigenous rights. On the 24<sup>th</sup> of June 2017, just two months before I departed for my fieldwork, Amis singer Ayal Komod raised a yellow towel with the words ‘No One is an Outsider’ printed in red at the Golden Melody Awards ceremony to express his anger towards the Asia Cement Corporation, which has operated the cement mine that has affected Truku people’s living environment since 1973. On that day, the slogan went viral and gained more attention from non-indigenous people.

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<sup>102</sup> In 2017, the indigenous singer Panai Kusui released her album ‘The Millet on Ketagalan Boulevard’(凱道上的稻穗). ‘As It Used to Be’(原來的樣子) is one of three songs on the album. The songs were recorded on Ketagalan Boulevard, an arterial road between the Presidential Building and the East Gate, where indigenous people held the protest.

During my fieldwork, I saw the slogan spread out in indigenous communities around Taiwan. It was made into products such as towels, mugs and stickers for indigenous groups for fundraising. At rallies, protesters draped the towels round their shoulders or tied them round their heads. Moreover, the yellow towels can be spotted in community-based organisations' offices, local shops and bars (Figure 8. 1). The idea that 'No One is an Outsider' also coincidentally echoes the idea of 'communitas' that Turner (1982:45) uses to explain liminality and describe a collective atmosphere when we try to destructuralise our mindset to differentiate the self and others:

'What then is communitas? Has it any reality base, or is it a persistent fantasy of mankind, a sort of collective return to the womb? I have described this way by which persons see, understand, and act towards one another as essentially "an unmediated relationship between historical, idiosyncratic, concrete individuals."'

'No One is an Outsider' is not just a slogan here, but a call to reframe the theory of medical anthropology while dealing with the issue of quasi-health problems such as drinking. When we consider Goffman's (1963:127) argument that it is 'not to the difference that one should look for understanding our differentness, but to the ordinary,' it follows that in order to avoid stigmatisation, we should turn the focus from the alterity and monstrosity of indigenous people's living style to recognising further that everyone deserves fundamental rights. Everyone may react to violent dispossession in similar ways.

The everyday morality of the minority groups, such as that of indigenous people who have not yet accomplished their goal of decolonisation, has fluidity and dynamics that represent resistance to historical oppression, and resilience to current

governmentality. If we presume that indigenous people should go back to a natural style of drinking that is more traditional, this is putting the cart before the horse. Furthermore, by echoing Goffman's (1963) reminder of stigma and Canguilhem's (1989) discussion of pathology, Napier (1992:141) points out that 'The "normal" is itself made up of the "deviant" in the same way, paradoxically, that the "normal" body is, according to Canguilhem, contingent upon the pathological one.' In this sense, we ought to stop obsessively thinking of how abnormal those behaviours are or how they should be corrected, but really turn to the effort of understanding indigenous people's ultimate demands.



Figure 8. 1 The slogan of 'No One is an Outsider' printed on the yellow towels. The left picture was taken at Bunun *Buluo* Leisure Farm in Yanping Township, Taitung; the right at a B&B in Orchid Island.

## 8.5 The passage to rites/rights

Anthropologists such as Bronislaw Malinowski (1925), Victor Turner (1967; 1969), Mary Douglas (1966; 1973) and Clifford Geertz (1973), among many others, extensively discuss the roles, symbols and functions of rituals. In our contemporary world, the various forms of ritual have been seen in broad definitions, including drinking itself. However, I would like to stress the symbolic social meaning of transformation regarding drinking practices. If there is an intentionality of looking

forward to living in prosperity and for mutual benefits with other groups for indigenous people, a ritual-like process is needed for indigenous people to acquire a position of equality in the broadly-defined 'communitas'.

Originating from ethnographer Arnold van Gennep's (1909:14) 'Les rites de passage' in which he writes that rites 'allow the individual to pass from one fixed situation to another equally fixed', scholars use the term 'rite of passage' to mark those ceremonial events of a society that signify the passage from one social or religious status to another. If traditional rites are declining and losing their functions under pressure, is there any mechanism of compensation in oppressed groups? The first thing that came to my mind was a psychological defence mechanism called 'reaction formation' regarding emotions or impulses that have been unconsciously acted out in an opposite and even amplified or exaggerated way to reject how one's 'ego' feels. In the light of seeking 'transitional justice' for indigenous people, I argue that the symbolic meaning of current drinking practices is a metaphor of 'passage to rites/rights', a reaction formation-like mechanism, a gesture of resistance and a self-fashioning practice to reject the historical collective destiny of marginalisation. Inspired by Clifford Geertz's ([1965]1973: 44) idea of cultural artifacts and definition of culture to be 'a set of control, instructions...for the governing of behaviour'; Greenblatt (2005:3) claims that 'self-fashioning is in effect the Renaissance version of these control mechanisms, the cultural system of meanings that creates specific individuals by governing the passage from abstract potential to concrete historical embodiment.' For Greenblatt (ibid.: 9), self-fashioning is a process of shaping one's identity that 'occurs at the point of encounter between an authority and an alien', such argument perfectly echoes indigenous people's refashioning their identities through drinking practices that reveal self-other relationships.

I describe my experience of invalid medical intervention in Chapter 2. I will always remember the awkward atmosphere in the *jiejiu* project clinical sessions since both the *jiejiuban* members and I had nothing to say other than questions and answers about how many units someone consumes in a week. However, whenever I sat down with *jiejiuban* members outside of the clinic, our conversation was more relaxed. Afterwards, I realised that local people privately complained about the *jiejiu* project, just as I learned from other fieldwork. Once an informant told me ‘We *yuanchumin* hate people who wear glasses the most’, and I soon realised that it was impossible for me to ‘go native’. But I understood something more about intersubjectivity through my glasses. There is always implicit anger among indigenous people since they were deprived of their rights for a long time by people who look like intellectuals.

When and how did indigenous people lose their rights? The historical process of colonisation, of course, plays a critical role. Taiwanese legal expert Hao-Jen Wu (2012) points out that after missionaries, naturalists and anthropologists joined hands to build a scientific system to define indigenous people as uncivilised savages, law-making excluded the personhood of indigenes. After that, indigenous people began to lose basic rights of all kinds since the coloniser disclaimed their ownership of the lands. Regarding this shameful past, Wu (ibid.) argues that legal experts and anthropologists should cooperate again, as they are the professionals of human rights and culture, and that indigenous people should consider them an empowering force for healing historical trauma and bringing people together.

Proposing anthropology of transitional justice, Hinton (2010) suggests that pursuits of transitional justice should aim at creating a category of ‘autonomous’ citizens marked by ‘freedom’, ‘equality’ and ‘rights’ through democratic practices. He also points out that ‘this production of knowledge and being in a context of transition



closely resembles a rite of passage, as the society in question moves from a preexisting conflict situation into a liminal phase of transition before emerging into a new state of liberalism' (ibid. 8).

In terms of 'rites of passage,' one may recognise drinking as part of the old forms of indigenous rituals. As a medical doctor, it would always be embarrassing to address health issues caused by local customs and, for a cultural anthropologist, it would be too naïve to claim that preserving an old ritual in its 'pure' form is the priority. A human rights advocate may assert that drinking is the result of historical trauma (Teyra 2017), or suggest with Napier (2014:9) that it is 'downright anticultural' to underestimate cultural difference. In search of transitional justice, the Taiwanese government clearly lists one of its tasks as to process and release information from different historical periods regarding the loss of traditional ceremonies and customs of indigenous peoples.<sup>103</sup> But how much should we take 'culture' into account? From what standpoint can we claim that drinking is related to structural violence but avoid over-emphasising victimhood? Would humanists act purely altruistically? How can we avoid cultural relativism when we try to revitalise those 'traditional' ceremonies while the so-called culture is ever-changing? Are we able to put alcohol use down to symbolic violence and inequality while also taking minority groups' subjectivity and agency into account?

To respond to the very first concern of indigenous people's health and alcohol use, we need to reconsider how indigenous people value their alcohol use in the current context. By raising questions of how we establish the value of things in practice, David Napier (ibid. 1-5) sets forth his challenge as an inquiry of the methods

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<sup>103</sup> See 'President Tsai approves Guidelines for Establishment of the Presidential Office Indigenous Historical Justice and Transitional Justice Committee' which was approved by the president on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2016. (Retrieved from: <https://indigenous-justice.president.gov.tw/EN/Page/47> on 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2019)

to make sense of what we experience through ‘embodied practice.’ That practice is to engage with local rituals as an emotional, spiritual and physical way of seeding how those meanings are cultivated in daily lives. As he puts it, ‘That we are capable of sensing the worlds created by other cosmologies and modes of thought is in itself an exciting thing to contemplate—a world where the universal idea of basic rights is complemented by a knowledge of the rites and rituals that allow for deep meaning to be cultivated in another’s local moral world’ (ibid. 12). This is why I use ‘passage to rite/rights’ to interpret indigenous people’s drinking practices. This has multiple manifestations but all reflect their struggle for a respectful life.

As previously mentioned, Taiwanese indigenous people are keen to make jokes and puns, which can be seen during protests. One of my informants, a Presbyterian pastor, told me they do that on purpose to manipulate the coloniser’s language. I mimic this play in changing the anthropological term to the ‘passage to rites/rights’, using it as inverse rhetoric to open up more critical and reflective understandings of indigenous people’s drinking practices. Nevertheless, I am neither trivialising alcohol’s impact on health nor idealising drinking as a cultural practice. But when we look closely at people sipping, toasting, swigging or even just saying no to alcohol as in turning down the offer of a drink, there should be more latent reasons that urge them to do so.

All the vignettes presented in this study are at the intersections of political, economic, cultural and historical contexts which are interwoven into the lifelines that reveal the minority groups’ life situations and shape their moral values. Only if we carefully depict the landscape of indigenous people’s moral worlds will we be able to realise how those health narratives can be reshaped and adjusted to fit indigenous

people's needs. To think more radically, we should sometimes bypass or even abandon those scientific discourses of alcoholism altogether.

The analogy of a traffic system is appropriate in the conclusion to a thesis about travelling, since this is one of my methodological approaches. If we look at indigenous people's drinking as slowing down and deviating at the road junction, like staying on a roundabout rather than running through it, this might help us see the multiple meanings of drinking in order to find the way out. Drinking practices take place at street rallies, dancing and singing at rituals, cheering at the dinner table or preparing pork before the *buluo* councils. Indigenous people's contemporary lives are a struggle against dispossession and a battle against oppression. Drinking practices run through those everyday moments, making those health interventions all the more invalid and meaning that they actually have adverse effects. In this time of enlightenment for human rights, the indigenous people's entangled and sometimes contradictory meanings of drinking practices represent the liminal state of confusion and helplessness, but they also reflect a calling for understanding and embracement. To conclude, only by reframing the epistemology of indigenous people's drinking practices through an intersubjective understanding can we open up the possibility of change. This study is just the beginnings of such a task.

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