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Department of Museum Studies

University of Leicester

March, 2003

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# **Learning, Recollection And Connection**

**A study of cultural identities  
amongst visitors to local  
museums in Taiwan**

Thesis submitted for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy at the University  
of Leicester

by

**Chia-Li Chen**

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University of Leicester

March, 2003

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# **Learning, Recollection And Connection: A Study of Cultural Identities amongst Visitors to Local Museums in Taiwan**

**Chia-Li Chen**

## **Abstract**

Post-1987 Taiwanese society has been undergoing a radical transformation. During the process of democratisation, political taboos were released, diverse discourses have been emerging and people in Taiwan are experiencing a period of identity confusion. Along with the social and political transformation Taiwan has seen a rapid growth of local museums in 1990s and many of them are housed in renovated historical buildings.

This thesis aims to examine the social and political background that has contributed to the rapid development of local museums in Taiwan to investigate the role of local museums in the construction of people's cultural identities in contemporary Taiwanese society. A qualitative research was employed; five museums were chosen as five case studies and twenty-five local frequent visitors were interviewed. Through systematic analysis of interview data a model explaining participants' construction of cultural identities in local museums has emerged. Learning, recollection and connection are identified as three major modes of visitors' experiences that influence the shaping of participants' cultural identities in local museums.

Based on historical review, observation and interview data, this thesis argues that the establishment of local museums within the renovation and preservation of historical building provides a space which people can visit, where they can recollect and with which they can identify. It is on the one hand a setting for informal learning, enabling participants to acquire information, compare it with their prior knowledge and construct their own historical views. On the other hand, it is a 'dream space' where visitors recollect and interweave their personal memories with the historical framework presented in the museum. Through this process, the museum enables visitors to reconnect with their locality, build a sense of belonging and construct their cultural identities based on locality and history.

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# Chapter 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background And Research Rationale

On May 12, 2000, Chen Shui-Bian took the presidential oath. He was the first president to come from the opposition Democratic Progressive Party (hereafter abbreviated as DPP) and thus ended the fifty- year authoritarian regime of Kuomintang (hereafter abbreviated as KMT). For people in Taiwan, it opened an entirely new democratic phase. During his inaugural lecture President Chen emphasised that no matter whether fine art or the local culture, both were part of the Taiwanese culture (Chen 2000). The idea of distinguishing Taiwanese culture from Chinese culture had been unimaginable a decade before. Under the regime of the nationalist government of KMT, Taiwan had been seen, both politically and culturally, as a part of China, and unification with China had been the ultimate goal ever since the KMT's retreat from China in 1949.

As Anderson states, the nation is “an imagined political community” and it is imagined because “the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion” (Anderson 1991: 6). To enhance the image of national ties a common history and cultural roots are regarded as essential. In the case of Taiwan, it is even more peculiar and ‘imagined’ for two reasons (Wang 2000: 113). First, Taiwan is not recognized as a state by the international community. Secondly, to deny the legitimacy of Communist government, the KMT government even claimed sovereignty over China in the past decades. As a consequence, people in Taiwan are constructed and identified as ethnically and culturally Chinese and regard the KMT government as the only legitimate regime that will re-conquer and govern the whole territory of China. Due to Taiwan's separation from China, both politically and geographically, the idea of sharing common cultural roots has been imperative for the construction of Chinese nationalism, which aimed to legitimise the KMT regime and prepare for the re-unification.

To achieve the goal, the KMT government emphasised Chinese history and culture through a national curriculum. In addition, the treasures transported from China in the 1949 retreat have been preserved in the National Palace Museum, which provides tangible evidence and a material link to Chinese culture. In other words, the museum with its collection and interpretation of Chinese culture, helps to bridge the gap between two different polities in reality. In contrast to the Cultural Revolution advanced in China that aimed to destroy the traditional Chinese heritage, the Republic of China in Taiwan with its great collection of Chinese culture, boasted to be the legitimate inheritor of Chinese culture and tradition.

In the past, the museum as a cultural institution has played an important role in the preservation and interpretation of Chinese cultural heritage in Taiwan and most museums were founded and run by the government. Thus museums were regarded more as political institutions that disseminated the dominant values of the regime. However, the cultural and political milieu has been changing since the lifting of the martial law in 1987, an act which returned the freedom of speech entitled by the constitution. Lee Teng-hui's succession to the presidency after the death of president Chiang Ching-kuo in 1988 was also significant. As the first native Taiwanese president to receive a Japanese and American education, Lee has a more liberal concept of democracy and is inclined to encourage the establishment of an individual Taiwanese culture. Under Lee's leadership as well as the rise of local culture after the lifting of the martial law in 1987, people's cultural identities are changing, and the role of the museum in Taiwan is being reshaped.

### **1.1.1 The Identity Crisis in Taiwan**

The Post-1987 Taiwanese society has been undergoing a radical transformation. During the process of democratisation, political taboos were released and diverse discourses have been emerging. The views that many held strongly are now open to question, such as unification with China being the supreme goal for all the people in Taiwan. Conversely a number of things that have been repressed are now gaining a voice and becoming accepted by more people, such as the independence of Taiwan.

Fundamentally, people are experiencing a period of identity confusion and it sometimes leads to confrontation among those who cling to different beliefs. As Mercer observes: “identity only becomes an issue when it is in crisis, when something assumed to be fixed, coherent and stable is displaced by the experience of doubt and uncertainty” (Mercer 1990:43). This is what most Taiwanese people experienced in the past decade following political liberation and social transformation. The lifting of restriction on people in travelling to China in 1987 has also increased the opportunity for mutual understanding, which highlights the great gap between political systems, beliefs and lifestyles across the Taiwan Strait. Consequently, Taiwanese people are becoming more conscious of the ambiguous status of Taiwan in the international community, tension with China, and its uncertain future, which have catalysed the question of national identity and increased the complexity of the issue of cultural identity.

Under these circumstances, some phenomena are emerging that aid the construction and formation of a new cultural identity. First of all, there are more and more interest groups and societies founded concerning social, environmental and cultural issues on the island, and some of these have brought issues onto the political agenda through demonstrations and strikes. These issues include women’s rights, the indigenous movement and the return of native language. These diverse and different voices from underneath directly challenge the existing cultural hegemony. Secondly, there is a rise in Taiwanese studies due to “the trend toward more political openness, the opposition party’s demand for ‘localization ‘ or ‘Taiwanization’, the worldwide interest in ‘searching for one’s roots...’” (Hsiao 1994:19). The shift of academic interest from classical Chinese history and philosophy to Taiwanese culture and history facilitates people to mediate and construct their cultural identities from different sources and angles. Thirdly, in response to the architectural preservation movement and the trend of nativism, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of local museums with all kinds of collection that have been founded in the past decade, and many of them are located in renovated historical buildings. It may be a deserted wine factory, an unused train station or a public spa. Taiwan seems to be entering the age of a heritage

boom. It is the last phenomenon that the research intends to explore to investigate the relationship between development of the local museums in Taiwan and people's cultural identities.

## 1.2 Perspectives on Cultural Identity

In this section, a brief review of theories of cultural identity is given to establish a theoretical framework in relation to the research questions and objectives.

Traditionally, philosophers believe there is an inner transcendental subject that constitutes the self-identity (Larrain 1994). However, such a concept has been challenged by many scholars who expose various resources such as the history, education and nationalism have played an important role in the construction of cultural identity. For example, Mead claims that the self "is essentially a social structure, and it arises in social experience" (Mead 1934: 140). Similarly, Giddens argues that the construction of modern self is a "reflexive project" which undergoes a process of "connecting personal and social change" (Giddens 1991: 32-33). Castells further claims that: "all identities are constructed". Though constructed, the identity is important for people since it is "people's source of meaning and experience" (Castells 1997a: 7).

In addition to sociologists, scholars of cultural studies are particularly concerned with the identity issues, especially the representation of cultural identities of disadvantaged and minority groups. They believe the identity issues "involves questioning how identities are produced and taken up through practices of representation" and the minority groups are struggling in articulating their cultural identities from symbols and languages constructed by the authority (Grossberg 1996: 90). Thus, the cultural identity is not only constructed through various cultural attributes but also in relation to others (Larrain 1994; Papastergiadis 1998).

The 'other' has played an important role for the construction of cultural identity. Basically, people search and confirm their cultural identities in the process of distinguishing themselves from others, by "the distinction from the values, characteristics and ways of life of others" (Larrain 1994: 142). When it is involved with unequal power relationship between different races, groups of people or the regime and its subjects, the process of formation and transformation of cultural identity is full of tension. In postcolonial discourses, the significant other for the colonised is the coloniser. The colonised projects their anxiety and cultural identity in constant dialogue and confrontation with the coloniser (Bhabha 1994; Papastergiadis 1998). Analysing cultural identity in postcolonial countries, Bhabha claims that "the question of identification is never the affirmation of a pre-given identity, never a self-fulfilling prophecy- it is always the production of an image of identity and the transformation of the subject in assuming that image" (Bhabha 1994: 45). During the encounter and confrontation between the coloniser and colonised, there is tension and difficulty in understanding and naming the other, which Bhabha terms it as 'ambivalence' (Papastergiadis 1998).

Bhabha's accounts have shed lights into the ambivalence and conflict one might face during the process of constructing and transforming the cultural identity in relation to others. Here, Stuart Hall's dynamic perspective on cultural identity is useful. He reveals two different ways of thinking about 'cultural identity', which help to clarify future discussion of present research. The first concept defines " 'cultural identity' in terms of one, shared culture, a sort of collective 'one true self...'" (Hall 1990: 223). He elaborates that this concept of cultural identity traces the common shared past and the imagined origin is widely applied by nationalism to form the common bond among people. Though powerful, it at the same time assists in distorting the past for the purpose of the coloniser, and disseminating some unchanged disfigured image of the colonised. Thus, Hall proposes a second concept of cultural identity which "is a matter of 'becoming' as well as of 'being' " (1990: 225). He explains:

It belongs to the future as much as to the past. It is not something which already

exists, transcending place, time, history and culture. Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But, like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialised past, they are subject to the continuous 'play' of history, culture and power (1990: 225).

To distinguish the second concept of cultural identity from the traditional transcendental identity, Hall traces and gives an explanation of three concepts of subjects in its historical framework: enlightenment subject, sociological subject and post-modern subject. The enlightenment subject was based on the concept that the individual is self-sufficient and "endowed with the capacities of reason, consciousness and action". The sociological subject "reflected the growing complexity of the modern world and the awareness that this inner core of the subject was not autonomous and self-sufficient, but was formed in relation to 'significant others', who mediated to the subject the values, meanings and symbols- the culture- of the worlds he/she inhabited" (Hall 1992: 275). The last one, the post-modern subject is "conceptualised as having no fixed, essential or permanent identity. Identity becomes a 'moveable feast': formed and transformed continuously in relation to the ways we are represented or addressed in the cultural systems which surround us" (Hall 1992: 277). To Hall, the post-modern subject has no fixed identity, and the cultural identity is in a state of movement, changing and transforming in condition to different situations.

Castells, on the other hand, proposes three types of identities: legitimizing identity, resistance identity and project identity to elaborate the formation of different identities as the outcomes in relation to the exercise of power. To be more specific, though individuals could not escape from the resources and attributes provided by the dominant institutions, Castells thinks that individuals do not always accept what are given to them and different identities are taken form in reaction to the dominant identity. Legitimizing identity refers to what is offered and introduced by the dominant institutions mainly for the purpose of domination, while resistance identity

applies to those who are devalued by the dominant identity and grow different ideas and identity in opposition to the dominant one. Project identity is a formation of new identity based on the previous two in order to “ build a new identity that redefines their position in society and, by so doing, seek the transformation of overall social structure” (1997: 8). By identifying the three different identities, Castells explains the formation of different cultural identities in its social context, and provides grounds and explanations for the formation of interested groups and social movements in post-1987 Taiwan.

To sum up, it is believed that people’s cultural identity is constructed and is subject to change. People project and construct their cultural identities through the material and information provided by various institutions and agents. Therefore to provide a holistic picture of people’s cultural identity, various sources of influence as well as the processes of formation and transformation of identities need to be recognised and pinpointed. Though the approach of cultural studies and sociology do not discuss the formation of cultural identities in the museum context, their concepts provide critical insights and a theoretical framework for the present research.

Applying the above concepts of cultural identity as a theoretical framework, the present research intends to discuss the construction of cultural identity in the Taiwanese museum context, with special emphasis on the history museum. Since the narrative of a shared history, an origin of common past, is often exhibited in the history museum, it is worth investigating how exhibits ‘play’ history and culture to construct the cultural identity of people. But as Hall points, cultural identity is constantly transforming and people also play an active role in pursuit of their cultural identities and resistance of the legitimate identities. Thus, how people position themselves and interact with exhibits also needs to be examined. Before investigating how people construct their cultural identities in the Taiwanese museum context, it is necessary to investigate the formation of Taiwanese identity in its historical context as well as review the current discussions on cultural identity in Taiwan.

### **1.2.1 Contemporary Debate on Cultural Identity in Taiwan**

After this brief review of theories of cultural identity, it is necessary to examine the issue in the Taiwanese context and introduce the current debates. The issue of cultural identity and its impact on society and politics has received a great deal of attention in contemporary Taiwan. In the past fifty years, under the KMT's authoritarian leadership and unequal policy that favoured the interest of mainlanders, three major ethnic identities which are commonly recognised and applied by the general public have taken form: mainlanders (those who emigrated to Taiwan after 1945), Taiwanese (those emigrated to Taiwan before 1945 from coastal provinces of China) and the aboriginal people (who have lived on the island for thousands of years). Though in recent years, much effort has been devoted to the construction of the 'New Taiwanese' aiming to include all people of different ethnicities in the formation of a new nation, nevertheless, the three ethnic divisions are still prevalent among people and are critical to the formation of cultural identity.

The current popular debate within the media on identity issues in Taiwan is centred on national identity which finds its expression in two opposed views: one is a Taiwanese identity which is prone to the movement of Taiwan Independence while the other is Chinese identity which favours the unification of People's Republic of China. The two opposed identities have caused cleavages and conflicts in the past and continue to evoke intense debates in contemporary Taiwan. Many surveys have been conducted to examine the relationship between national identity and the three ethnicities, and the results confirm that ethnic Taiwanese constitute the major groups of Taiwanese identity while most mainlanders are adherents of Chinese identity. However, some people, especially the younger generation who received their education under nationalist KMT government regard themselves both as Chinese and Taiwanese. In general, statistics show there is an increased feeling for Taiwanese identity in the past decade following the process of democratisation and endeavour to form a new Taiwanese identity (Chu 2000:304; Liu and Ho 1999).

One scholar points out the complexity of the issue and suggests that there is no single

identity and “one’s national identity is not necessarily congruent with his/her cultural identity” (Chu 1998: 63). Therefore, he suggests that the two concepts: political China and Cultural China should be distinguished (Chu 1998: 35). For example, some people might prefer the independence of Taiwan but still think they are successors of Chinese culture. Others, who are more inclined towards a new Taiwan-centred identity are motivated primarily by “the impulse to fight for a sovereignty that can guarantee an unconstrained international space, rather than a nationalist motive to cut off all the cultural and racial identification with China” (Liu and Ho 1999: 303). Therefore the issue of people’s cultural identity in Taiwan presents a rather complicated picture.

If we examine the ethnic issue in contemporary Taiwan, there is a phenomenon emerging: on the one hand there are more and more minority groups requesting a return of their mother tongue and culture, on the other hand there is an attempt from both the government and academic circles to construct a shared community based on the invented notion “ We are all New Taiwanese”. The former movement prompts the boom in researching local cultures while the latter aims to resolve the conflicts and collisions caused by the division of cultural identities. These two, seemingly opposing directions have characterised the contemporary Taiwanese cultural territory. It is noteworthy that the effort of promoting the concept of the shared community and new Taiwanese people is, as some scholars have pointed out, indeed a project of nation-state building (Chien and Wang 1995). Scholars with the background of cultural studies have expressed their concerns about the potential risk of repressing differences in order to pursue a homogeneous Han- dominant nation (Chien and Wang 1995; Yu 1995). Such a nation excludes the underprivileged, and the aborigines might also be excluded (Liang 1994). On the other hand, sociologists applying the quantitative survey have expressed more positive views toward the formation of a new cultural identity. They believe Taiwanese society is transforming itself from the authoritarian one into a civil society (Hsiao 1990). They also indicate that there is an increased number of people identifying themselves as Taiwanese (Chen, 1997:15, (Liu and Ho 1999:33). Based on the quantitative data, Chen concludes that people in

Taiwan “have gradually developed into a nationality from residing in a locality, identifying themselves with land and jointly developing a feeling of nationhood” (Chen 1997b: 19).

### **1.2.2 Identity in The Age of Globalisation**

After this brief review of the identity issue in Taiwan, it is necessary to explore the issue in a broader context. As the development of capitalism and technology, it is believed that the age of globalisation is coming, in which the traditional concept of time and space and the national boundary is dissolving. Several factors contribute to the emergence of the age of globalisation. McGrew argues that the enormous flows of peoples across national boundaries and the emerging authority of institutions and communities above the nation-state facilitate the process for globalisation. In this process, the traditional conception of society as a bounded, ordered and unified social space is challenged (McGrew 1992: 63). In a similar vein, Castells predicts that the modern state will gradually lose its legitimacy and power because it is unable to control the flow of information, which is the foundation of state power (Castells 1997a: 258). He predicts that for the years to come “nation-states will be struggling to control information circulating in globally interconnected telecommunication networks... And with this eventual defeat will come the loss of a cornerstone of state power” (Castells 1997a: 259). Because of the trend towards the de-centralisation of power of the nation-state, he predicts the rise of the power of local government along with the construction of local identities. He explains:

On the one hand, because of the territorial differentiation of state institutions, regional and national minority identities find their easiest expression at local and regional levels. On the other hand, national governments tend to focus on managing the strategic challenges posed by the globalization of wealth, communication, and power, hence letting the lower power levels of governance take responsibility for linking up with society by managing everyday life’s issues, so to rebuild legitimacy through decentralization (Castells 1997a: 272).

During the process of globalisation, the different states came to merge as a community, through Internet communication and its global market on the one hand. On the other hand, as Castells pinpoints, the process of globalisation intensifies the crisis of identity, therefore the search for local identities has become more urgent. How do people construct cultural identities in this circumstance? As Hall argues: “All identities are located in symbolic space and time” (Hall 1992:301). Traditionally, the cultural identities are closely connected with the nation, locality and places that people live in and identify with. In that age of globalisation, people constantly travel through different space, real or virtual, and their sense of space and time is gradually differentiated from place, the locality they live in. Harvey distinguishes these two terms and argues that the idea of places remain fixed, however space can be ‘crossed’ in one instant (Hall 1992:302). Under this circumstance, it might be argued that the local museum with its physical existence and tangible evidence, is one of the most important strongholds for people to establish a sense of place and construct their cultural identities.

### **1.3 The Scope of This Research**

In this section, research questions and objectives will be outlined. To answer these research questions, the methodology that this research intends to employ will also be briefly introduced.

#### **1.3.1 Research Questions**

What is the relationship between the growth of local museums and the rapid social transformation in Taiwan? How do local residents interact with museums? Situating in its social background, my research aims to shed light on the recent development in Taiwanese museums by exploring its role in the construction of people’s cultural identity. Cultural identity revolves around a complex set of concepts; it is generally intertwined with ethnicity, history and language, and in modern times “the cultural identity which has had the most important influence on the formation of subjects is the notion of national identity” (Larrain 1994: 154). For the construction of national

identity, the most important component is the sense of history, which helps to construct a common past and thus a sense of belonging. Many local museums in Taiwan are housed in renovated historical buildings, with collections of daily items made or used by people in Taiwan, they are more than an educational institution; they are places where people meet with their imagination, memories and identities.

Under this circumstance, my research intends to answer the following questions:

1. What is the relationship between social transformation and emerging local museums?
2. What is the role of the local museum in the construction of people's cultural identity in contemporary Taiwanese society?
3. In what ways do visitors interact with local museums in connection with their cultural identities?

To answer my research questions, the relationship between social transformation in post-1987 Taiwanese society and the emergence of local museums will be examined. In addition, centred on the issue of cultural identity in a social context, the research aims to investigate how community residents interpret exhibits and respond to historical sites in relation to the construction of cultural identity. The objectives of my research are:

1. To identify and describe the factors that have contributed to the growth of local museums in Taiwan.
2. To explore the role of the local museum in the construction of people's cultural identities.
3. To generate rich and detailed accounts of local frequent visitors' museum experiences in relation to the construction of their cultural identities.

To achieve the research objectives, this research will employ a qualitative approach and a communication model will be introduced in the next section.



literature and art but none of this has conducted a systematic research on the role of the Taiwanese museum in the construction of cultural identity of people in Taiwan. In addition to analyse the content and information communicated by the museum, this research employs the technique of the in-depth interview to explore how visitors make meanings in relation to their cultural identities during their visits. Detailed discussions on the methodology and research techniques applied in this research will be explained in Chapter Three. By so doing it is hoped that the research will provide a better understanding of the role of museums in the construction of people's cultural identity in contemporary Taiwan.

## **1.4 Thesis Structure**

This chapter presents the context of this research, the research question and the theoretical framework of this thesis. It points out the conflict of cultural identity in contemporary Taiwanese society and aims to explore the role of the local museum in the construction of people's identity. To provide a theoretical framework, this chapter investigates theories of cultural identity in the fields of sociology and cultural studies. In particular the theories presented by Stuart Hall and Manuel Castells emerge as valuable and relevant to this research. In the last section of this chapter, a brief review of visitor studies in museum field and the communication model proposed by Hooper-Greenhill provide the grounds for the overall methodology of this thesis.

After this introductory chapter, Chapter Two sets the background of this thesis by investigating the development of museums in Taiwan in their social and political context. The background of the phenomenon of the museum boom in the 1990s as well as the history of the development of local museums are examined and explored in this chapter. Chapter Three is a methodology chapter. The reasons for applying a qualitative case study method, the criteria of choosing case studies and interviewees, and the process of fieldwork are explained and presented in detail. Chapter Four presents the five museums chosen as case studies in this research. In each case, the background to the establishment of the museum, the content of exhibitions and the

interaction of the museum and its visitors are introduced and discussed. Applying grounded theory, Chapter Five explores the interview data with the assistance of computer software, QSR Nudist 4, to demonstrate the emergence of patterns and key themes, and identify three modes of meaning-making process. These are learning, recollection, and connection.

Following the discovery of three modes of meaning-making process from the data, Chapters Six, Seven and Eight analyse the interview data in detail in relation to each mode. By so doing, it is hoped to provide insights into visitors' museum experiences. Chapter Six draws on theories of adult learning and analyses the learning outcomes of visitors interviewed in the research. It suggests that visitors' learning outcomes vary in different types of museums. Some strategies applied by visitors are identified: acquiring new information, comparing with prior knowledge, and constructing their own historical views. The aesthetic experiences that visitors have in the art museums are also discussed. Chapter Seven focuses on the affective experiences that visitors have in the museums researched. It analyses how visitors recollect; different patterns of recollections emerged during the process of data analysis. To facilitate the discussion, the analyses are divided into two parts: memories in relation to the museum building itself and memories triggered by exhibits. There are five patterns of memories recollected by historical buildings: recollection of a life episode, memories of household life in the past, childhood memories, reconstruction of a historical event and reflection, association and creation of memories. Another five patterns of memories triggered by exhibits are discovered: the experience of using objects, the economic condition of the past, the relationship with family, the collective trauma of historical tragedy, and the loss of youth. Chapter Eight introduces post-modernist concepts of time and space and analyses participants' experiences from the specific time and space of the museum. It suggests that the museum provides participants with a different space and time separating them from their daily lives and connecting them with the past. In the museum, participants learn and recollect and during this meaning-making process, the sense of locality is enhanced and historical views and cultural identities are constructed.

The concluding chapter briefly reviews the research questions, methods and findings. It also points out the contribution of this research and makes recommendations for future research.

## **Chapter 2 The Development of Local Museums in Taiwan since 1987**

## **Introduction**

This chapter presents the social and historical background and the development of local museums in Taiwan since 1987. To understand the rapid growth of museums in 1990s Taiwan, a brief introduction to the social and political context before 1987 is necessary and is presented in the first part of the chapter. In 1987 the lifting of martial law triggered a series of social movements such as the founding of different political parties, the increase of demonstrations by interest groups, and the establishment of various media and radio stations. It is believed that the civil society was taking form in Taiwan (Hsiao 1990). Under these circumstances, the social background to the rapid growth of history museums in the 1990s, such as the rise of local culture, the architectural preservation movement, and the changed cultural policy is discussed. In the final part, a brief history of the development of museums in Taiwan is outlined, and the characteristics of local museums are explored.

### **2.1 The Social and Political Context before 1987**

Taiwanese society underwent a dramatic transformation in the late 1980s. These rapid political, social and cultural changes make it difficult to capture the whole picture of its development. To contextualise the museum development of Taiwan in the 1990s, a brief history of Taiwan will be reviewed in connection with some significant events to draw a picture of the social and political transformation in the past decade. By so doing it is hoped to provide the background and ideas underlying the rapid growth of the museums in that decade.

From 1895 Taiwan was a colony of Japan for fifty years until the end of Second World War in 1945. At the Cairo Conference held in 1943, it was decided that Taiwan should return to Mainland China once the Allied Forces won the war. The reunion with Mainland China however only lasted for four years because of the defeat of the KMT (Kuomintang, the political party founded by Dr. Sun Yat-sen and led by Chiang Kai-shek at that time) by the Communist Party in 1949. Even that short

period of reunion was turbulent. The greatest massacre in Taiwanese history, known as 228 Incident, occurred on February 28, 1947. Many of the Taiwanese elite were either killed or went abroad during this holocaust. Some scholars believe that this incident played an important part in the formation of the present division into two main ethnic groups in Taiwan: that is, the mainlanders and the Taiwanese. It is also the root of the ethnic hostility between these two major groups, and has become one of the most difficult issues in modern Taiwanese society. Wachman, among many others claims that the 228 Incident is one of the origins of the formation of Taiwanese identity (Wachman 1994: 91-2). More detailed discussions on the background and history of the incident will be introduced in the case study of the Taipei 228 Memorial Museum in Chapter Four.

After the KMT's defeat by the Communist party and retreat from Mainland China in 1949, to legitimate and consolidate his regime Chiang Kai-shek had declared the martial law, restricting the political rights and freedom of speech of people, and extended the powers of the presidency to an extreme degree. From the experience of the 228 Incident, the KMT regime also learned the importance of strengthening control over the Taiwanese people by the restriction of their political rights as well as by the enhancement of nationalist education. In the following sections, the cultural and educational policy imposed by the nationalist government, the formation of Taiwanese identity and the emergence of social political movements will be discussed.

### **2.1.1 The Implementation of Chinese Culture**

While coercive politically, the nationalist government was also dedicated to introducing and consolidating Chinese culture and history among people in Taiwan. They believed Taiwanese people had been under great influence from Japanese thought and culture, and therefore needed to be re-educated. To strengthen the cultural bond, the government was dedicated to promote Chinese culture on the one hand, and devalued Taiwanese culture as uncultivated local culture on the other hand. Speaking local dialects was discouraged in public places and studies in Taiwanese

history were regarded as the promotion of the independence of Taiwan and thus were prohibited, while there was a great promotion of Chinese culture. In contrast to the Cultural Revolution in China, which aimed to tear down the old Chinese traditions, the Chinese Cultural Renaissance Movement was launched in Taiwan in the 1960s, which disseminated Confucian philosophy and tradition and encouraged studies of Chinese culture. Mandarin was made the official language and traditional Chinese written characteristics were taught in school. Also, the imposition of Chinese culture education was essential for the KMT to support its claim to its validity of its regime. The implementation of Chinese culture, as Hughes notes, was penetrating in every field: “The inculcation of a Chinese national identity went much further than language policy. Time was also ‘nationalized’ by counting from 1912 as year one... Space was nationalized with maps showing the national territory as including the whole of the Chinese mainland and Outer Mongolia. Streets were renamed after mainland places, while educational and cultural institutions (such as the National Palace Museum, where much of China’s cultural heritage from the mainland was preserved) were held to the true successors to their mainland counterpart” (Hughes 1997: 29).

In the national curriculum, Dr. Sun Yat-sen’s Three Principles of People and Chinese nationalism were expressed in many subjects, such as Chinese literature, history and geography, which are the core courses for all high school students in Taiwan. Students also learned that Taiwan was only a temporary place to stay in and the ultimate goal was to employ Taiwan as bastion to re-conquer Mainland China and save our fellow people who had been starving and suffering under the government of the Communist government. Under these circumstances, people in Taiwan learned very little about Taiwanese history, geography and culture, and this Chinese culturally centred educational principle dominated the national curriculum until the 1990s.

### **2.1.2 The Formation of Taiwanese Identity**

Before investigating the issue of cultural identity in contemporary Taiwan, it is necessary to trace the formation of Taiwanese identity in its historical context. Originally, the term Taiwan referred only to a geographic area; the emergence of

Taiwanese consciousness was in 1895 when the Qing dynasty ceded Taiwan to the Japan Empire. Though Taiwanese consciousness first emerged as “an expression of Chinese national sentiments against Japanese colonialism”(Tu 1996: 1123), it has subsequently been developed and constructed as an identity different from Chinese identity through constant dialogue with it. Wachman in his research on the formation of Taiwanese identity argues four factors as the origins of it:

1. The separation from the rest of China and the collective memory of succeeding periods during which forces came from elsewhere to impose control on the island's people.
2. The friction between the KMT and the Taiwanese stemming from persistent memories of initial misperceptions and early conflicts;
3. The sense that a distinct Taiwanese culture and consciousness differs from Han culture and Chinese consciousness, and
4. a legacy of frustration resulting from the authoritarian nature of KMT rule, which seemed to favor Mainlanders and their interests over the Taiwanese, and which, in an effort to resocialize Taiwanese as Chinese, inadvertently reinforced mutual perceptions of difference (Wachman 1994: 91-2).

First, geographically, Taiwan is separated from China. Though most people in Taiwan are ethnic Chinese, different regimes such as those of the Dutch, the Qing Dynasty (China) and the Japanese colonial empire have governed Taiwan. Thus people in Taiwan have experienced and developed different social and political systems.

Though different in life experiences, most people still regarded themselves as Chinese and China as their mother country since they shared a similar culture and language. It was only after the outburst of the 228 Incident that people in Taiwan started to question their Chinese identity. During the Incident, the KMT massacred more than twenty thousand Taiwanese, and after it there were two decades of what became known as white terror. During KMT's authoritarian government, many people in Taiwan viewed the KMT's regime as a colonial government, similar to the Japanese

colonial government, and in some cases it was even worse (Balcom 1999: 17). Due to the 228 Incident and many other conflicts, people in Taiwan started to regard those who came to Taiwan with the KMT after 1945 as mainlanders, a group of people different from Taiwanese who moved to Taiwan before 1945.

Apart from the 228 Incident, which caused great conflict between the two groups of people, the political and social division played a role in deepening the cleavage between the mainlanders and Taiwanese people. To secure loyalty and ensure the superiority of the mainlanders, who represented fifteen percent of the total population, most of the higher officials and military posts in the central government were only occupied by the mainlanders before the mid-1970s (Lin and Lin 1993).<sup>1</sup> The term of members of parliament elected in China was extended until their death, and no Taiwanese people could be represented in parliament under this system. Houses were built for mainlanders, who formed their own communities separate from the native population. In general, the mainlanders considered themselves superior culturally and politically. This social division is what Fanon describes as “a world cut in two”(Fanon 1968: 38). In Fanon’s analysis of the practice of colonialism, it is through the division of the coloniser (the superior) and the colonised (the inferior) that the former colonial powers established their colonial empires (Fanon 1968). This division very often coincides with ethnic demarcation. Ironically, Taiwanese people and mainlanders are both ethnically Chinese, but the KMT regime tactically employed similar techniques to those that the former colonial power practiced, and segregated people into two major groups. Under these circumstances, as Tu indicates, de-Sinicization becomes a precondition for a new Taiwanese cultural identity (Tu 1996: 1117).

Apart from the sentiment towards the KMT and mainlanders in general, Gold on the other hand explains the emergence of the identity question in the international politics of post-war Taiwan. He argues that political isolation and increasing pressure from the

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<sup>1</sup> This situation had not been improved until the mid-1970s when Chiang, Ching-kuo took the position of the premier minister and initiated the policy of nativism by allocating more Taiwanese to take posts in the central government.

People's Republic of China made people in Taiwan think of political reality and reflect upon their national identity. Influenced by the process of democratisation of neighbouring countries in Asia by the middle 1980s as well as the popularisation of education and western democratic ideas, people started to question the legitimising identity, and the pursuit of an alternative identity became pressing and imperative (Gold 1994: 54-55).

The particular social and political situation of Taiwan gives rise to the formation of Taiwanese cultural identity. In post-colonial discourse, the formation of national identity is often based on the distinction between the colonised and the other, the coloniser. However, in the case of Taiwan, the process of forming Taiwanese consciousness is rather different from other post-colonised states. The formation of Taiwanese identity originates not only from people's collective memories and shared experiences, but also in its constant relation with the other, China. It is in its distinction from the Chinese culture, and sometimes with resource and reference to Japanese colonial experience, that Taiwanese consciousness is growing and developing.

### **2.1.3 The Emergence of Social and Political Issues**

Under political coercion and cultural oppression, people in Taiwan have developed a particular attitude to life. First, people became silent and indifferent to politics. After the 228 Incident, people in Taiwan experienced a period of 'white terror' and whoever had any relation to the 228 Incident or participated in any communist organisation was either jailed or executed. As Tu indicates: "The notorious 28 February Incident (1947) devastated Taiwan's urban intelligentsia. Although physical violence was flagrant, cultural cruelty was even more devastating" (Tu 1996: 1123). Under these circumstances, people were terrified to speak out or express any opposition viewpoint publicly. The facts of the 228 Incident have been repressed and the incident remained a taboo among Taiwanese people until the late 1980's. Before the lifting of martial law, most of the younger generation did not even hear about this incident at all. Secondly, with little chance of a political career, most Taiwanese people were encouraged to

devote themselves to the advance of the economy. Making life better by wit and hard work became the sole goal for most Taiwanese people. Many researchers have pointed out that the combination of successful central policy such as the land reform and government led planned economy, and a diligent and educated workforce creates the economic miracle, which led Taiwan to be one of the 'four dragons' of Asia<sup>2</sup>.

In general, the income of people in Taiwan reaches the standard of developing country in 1980s, however, the economy-led development also caused many problems such as pollution and urban problems, which earned Taiwan the title of cultural desert since the development was at the expense of the exploitation of cheap labour and natural resources. After the rapid development of the economy and industrialisation in the 1980s, Taiwan has faced serious environmental, social and cultural issues. In 1980s Taiwan became one of the richest countries in Asia, however the environment continued to worsen and the social gap between the rich and the poor, the mainlanders and the Taiwanese people, the majority and the minority (especially for the aboriginals) continues to enlarge. However, there are also some positive signs. As the development of the economy and the expansion of education progressed, more and more people who either went abroad for advanced studies or were exposed to western ideas of democracy increased their dissatisfaction with the authoritarian polity and started to search for means to improve social conditions.

## **2.2 The Rise of Civil Society**

In the 1980s, discontent grew and the first outburst was the eruption of the political demonstrations led by dissidents. Though there were some minor demonstrations addressing these issues before the lifting of martial law, they did not attract the attention of the general public. Not until the lifting of martial law enabling people to regain the right of demonstration and freedom of speech under the constitution, did the demonstrations and social movements become a social phenomenon. Scholars

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<sup>2</sup> In Asia, Taiwan, South Korea, Hong Kong and Singapore are generally referred as 'four dragons' in Asia because of their rapid economic development in the past decades.

believe that the increasing number of demonstrations and the founding of new newspapers and radio stations are indications of the emergence of civil society in Taiwan (Hsiao 1990; Myers 1996:1074). It is characterised by Hsiao as a ‘demanding civil society’ in which the citizens claim a ‘participatory political culture’ (Hsiao 1990:178). It is believed that engaged citizens may help to form a good society (Ellison 2000).

Though sociologists in Taiwan pay little attention to the growth of museums, the museum plays a unique role in the civil society. For example, Karp claims: “As integral parts of civil society, museums often justify their existence on the grounds that they play a major role in expressing, understanding, developing, and preserving the objects, values, and knowledge that civil society values and on which it depends” (Karp 1992: 5). The development of museums, along with the other social movements and political reform, facilitated the formation of civil society in Taiwan.

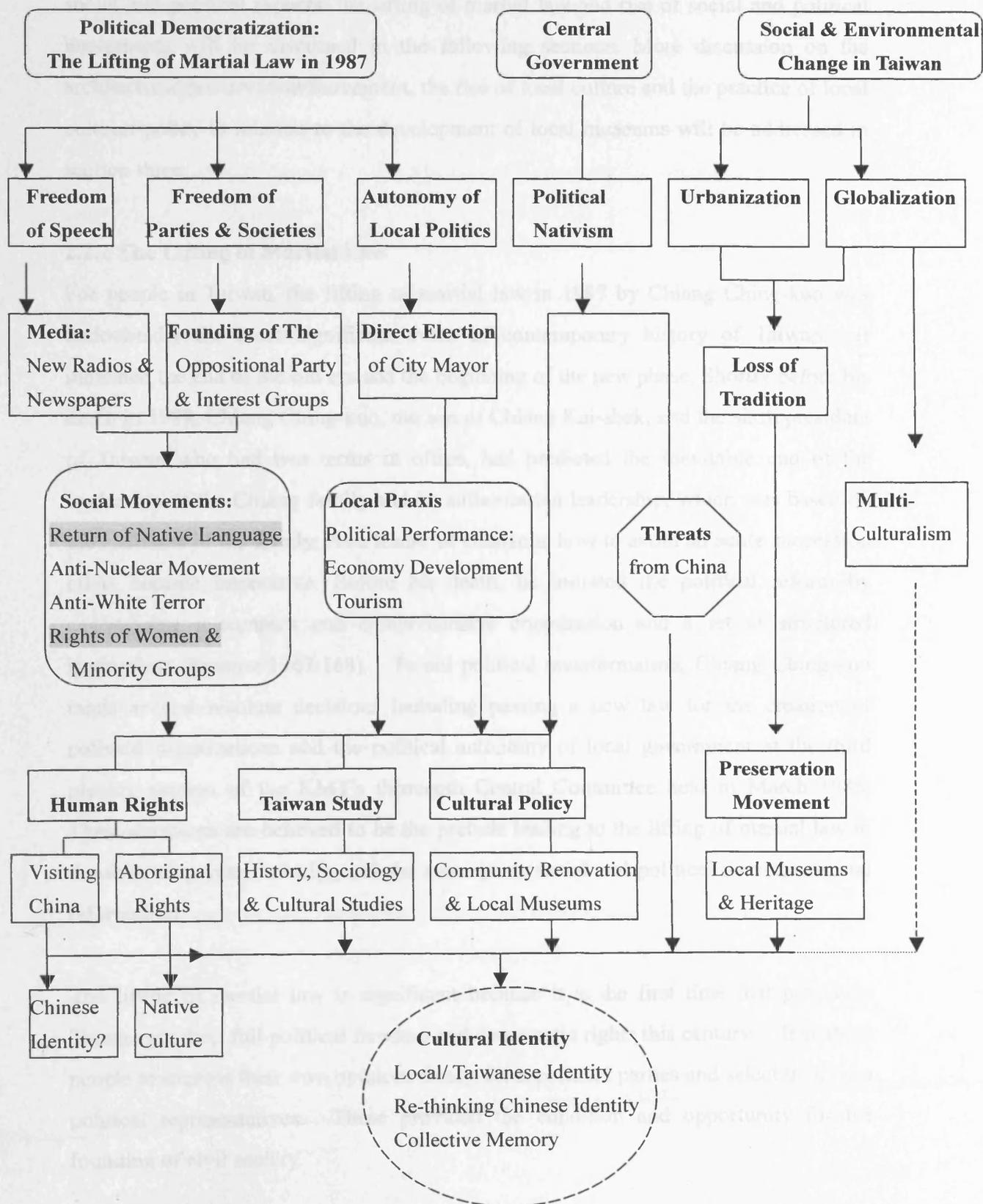
### **2.2.1 Social Transformation And Cultural Identity**

To illustrate the relationship between social formation and people’s cultural identities, a diagram is drawn (See Fig.2). From this diagram, one can see three major factors influencing people’s cultural identities: the social transformation after the lifting of martial law in 1987, the political nativism of the central government, and the social and environmental change in Taiwan. Among them, the lifting of martial law in 1987 is considered to be the most significant event; various social and political reforms were triggered such as the emergence of social movements and the greater autonomy of local government. Following social transformation, there is a demand for human rights, a rise in Taiwanese studies and a change of cultural policy. In addition, the political nativism which emphasises the promotion of local culture has influenced both the central government and local government’s cultural policy.

These social political changes have influenced people’s cultural identities in Taiwan. For example, as a result of the increase in visits of Taiwanese people to China after 1987 the lifting of the ban on traveling to China, people have been able to compare

the real China with the imaginary picture taught in Taiwan. As research points out, though many people went to China to search for their roots, few choose to move back to China mainly because of the different social and political systems. Also when people in Taiwan visit China, they are greeted and regarded as Taiwanese compatriots than as Chinese (Ling and Qu 1992). These invite people to rethink their Chinese cultural identity. Along with social transformation, the leadership under the first native president, Lee Teng-hui also increased the doubts of Chinese communist government, which believed that President Lee was in favour of Taiwanese independence. The continued and intense military threat imposed by the communist government in 1990s has also caused people's reaction to and uncertainty around Chinese identity. Apart from social political transformation, other factors such as rapid urbanisation and the crisis of loss of tradition also contribute to the rise of the architectural preservation movement, which has had a direct influence on the development of local museums in Taiwan.

Fig. 2: The Relationship between Social Transformation and Cultural Identity in Taiwan



To set the context of the development of local museums in post -1987 Taiwan, two social and political aspects: the lifting of martial law and rise of social and political movements will be discussed in the following sections. More discussion on the architectural preservation movement, the rise of local culture and the practice of local cultural policy in relation to the development of local museums will be addressed in section three.

### **2.2.2 The Lifting of Martial Law**

For people in Taiwan, the lifting of martial law in 1987 by Chiang Ching-kuo was undoubtedly the most significant event of contemporary history of Taiwan. It indicated the end of the old era and the beginning of the new phase. Shortly before his death in 1988, Chiang Ching-kuo, the son of Chiang Kai-shek, and the sixth president of Taiwan who had two terms in office, had predicted the inevitable end of the leadership of the Chiang family and its authoritarian leadership, which was based on the charisma of the family. As a leader of charisma, how to avoid an acute succession crisis became imperative. Before his death, he initiated the political reform by encouraging a complex and comprehensive organization and a set of structured institutions (Rustow 1967:168). To aid political transformation, Chiang Ching-kuo made several resolute decisions including passing a new law for the creation of political organizations and the political autonomy of local government at the third plenary session of the KMT's thirteenth Central Committee held in March 1986. These decisions are believed to be the prelude leading to the lifting of martial law in the following year and triggered the subsequent social and political movements and reformation.

The lifting of martial law is significant because it is the first time that people in Taiwan got their full political freedom and democratic rights this century. It enabled people to express their own opinions freely, form political parties and select their own political representatives. These provided the condition and opportunity for the founding of civil society.

### **2.2.3 Social and Political Movements**

As mentioned few political movements emerged before the lifting of martial law. From the 1970s onwards, there were political movements and a group of people called Dang-Wai (literally means outside the party) who criticized the KMT's regime severely, and some of them even advocated the independence of Taiwan. All these political movements were of course, repressed by nationalist government before 1987. Many of the Dang-wai members either fled to the United States and continued their activities abroad or were sent to prison on charges of violating social security or treason. For them, the lifting of martial law is what they had pursued for years and it opened a new page of the history of the development of democracy in Taiwan. Many of them returned to Taiwan or were released from prison, and they joined the opposition party, the Democratic Progressive Party, which was formed, the year before the lifting of martial law.<sup>3</sup>

In addition to the formation of the DPP, during the same period of time, many interested groups were established, which expressed their discontent and interests through strikes and demonstrations. It shows the awakening awareness and active participation in public affairs of people in Taiwan. Demonstrations started before the lifting of martial law, but reached their peak around 1987. According to Gold, there were 2,900 demonstrations in total from 1983 to 1988, but there were 1,172 demonstrations in 1988 alone. It shows that two thirds of the total demonstrations occurred in 1987-1988 (Gold 1994: 58). The issues addressed in these social movements cover various aspects such as the demand for political freedom, the rights of disadvantaged groups, and protests against environmental pollution and expensive housing. They reflected various problems of society after decades of uneven development; they also urged the necessity of transformation of the society. Hsiao observed four types of social movement summarised as follows:

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<sup>3</sup> The DPP was founded illegally in 1986 and out of people's expectation, it was tolerated by Chiang, Ching-kuo. It did not gain its legal position until 1989.

1. Grievance against the state's inaction when confronted by problems, with new demands for consumer protection, pollution control, and ecological conservation.
2. Protests against state policies regarding ethnic groups and minorities' language rights, land control, and cultural identity and preservation...
3. Challenges to the state's corporatist mode of control over key social groups such as workers, farmers, students, women, and teachers and intellectuals.
4. Demands to change the established rules governing politically sensitive issues such as the ban on contacts between the people of Taiwan and the Mainland, and the human rights of political victims (Hsiao 1990:166-7).

In general, these social movements challenged various inadequate policies of the government and challenged authoritarianism of the regime. Among these issues, the demand for democratic reform has caught most attention. Political rights and democratic reform have been largely improved in 1990s largely due to the efforts of the growing DPP and people's support for democracy, while more sensitive and complicated issues such as the return of mother tongue use, educational reform, and conflicting cultural identities remain unresolved. Though optimistic about the emergence and formation of civil society in Taiwan, some scholars also indicate there is a rising tension between conflicting ideologies and identities; they also worry that the decrease in social movements from the mid-1990s might suggest the diminishing of the number of diverse voices and less tolerance between groups in the society.

One of the reasons of the decrease of social movements in the mid-1990s is that more resources and public attention were drawn to the issue of political democratisation only. Some other issues, which had gained more attention in the late eighties such as the rights of minorities or the underprivileged are largely ignored in the nineties (Chiu 1994: 85). Though the number of demonstrations is decreasing, along with the establishment of new organizations and institutions such as the mass media, cultural societies and local museums, various venues and networks of communication are available. Responding to the new social condition, many interest groups have also

changed their strategies from temporary movements toward more permanent objectives by establishing societies or institutions.<sup>4</sup> During the process of social transformation, people in Taiwan have been mobilized, speaking out about their interests and several venues have been established which helps forming and transforming their identities. Apart from the establishment of new newspapers and radio stations, the rapid growth of local museums has become phenomenal in 1990s' Taiwan. In the following section, the social background of the rapid development of local museums in Taiwan will be explored and discussed.

## **2.3 The Background to the Development of Local Museums**

Various reasons have contributed to the rapid development of local museums in the 1990s. First, following the process of democratisation, there has been a rise in local studies. More and more people are interested in Taiwanese history and culture. Societies and workshops for local studies were established in every corner of Taiwan. To show the results of their studies, the establishment of local museums was needed. Secondly, many historical buildings are preserved as a result of the architectural preservation movement. To refurbish and reuse historical buildings as museums is considered by scholars and local government to be the best way of keeping historical buildings alive. Thirdly, a cultural policy, which promotes local culture and assists local governments to establish local museums also plays a crucial role in the establishment of local museums.

### **2.3.1 The Rise of Local Culture**

The lifting of martial law not only accelerated the process of political democratisation, but also catalysed the social and cultural transformation. Things that were prohibited, such as discussion of the 228 Incident and discouraged such as Taiwanese studies, have become popular topics. The lifting of the ban on founding new newspapers and

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<sup>4</sup> Many minority groups such as aboriginal groups began to edit their own magazines and try to write in their own languages. Instead of demanding the monetary compensation, other interest groups such as the environmental groups have diverted their target on "the 'entrepreneurial politics' - promoting policies that benefit the general public in opposition to the interests of concentrated and organized groups" (Tang and Tang 1999:353).

the freedom of speech also speeded up the boom of research on Taiwanese history and culture; the increase in private-run newspapers and radios facilitates the formation of a public forum. All these help to build communication and dialogue between different groups and opinions.

In literature and art, there are increasing works discussing sensitive issues such as the 228 Incident and minority groups' rights. There is also a boom in local studies; more than fifty local studies and culture societies were founded after 1987, compared with only fourteen registered before, according to the survey conducted in 1995<sup>5</sup>. The reporter claims that the local studies have become a movement of the whole population in Taiwan and this indicates people's passion for the pursuit and understanding of their own culture and history (Chen 1995: 52). As Winckler argues "culture did not just 'happen', but was 'made' by somebody and not equally by everybody" (Winckler 1994: 22). Apart from people's increasing interests in local culture, several policies for promoting local studies were also implemented by the government. The subject of local studies was introduced into the national curriculum for primary schools and junior high schools in 1996 (Yao 2000: 2). Unlike the old curriculum, which emphasises Chinese history and culture, the new curriculum emphasises the learning and understanding of Taiwanese history and culture. Students in the elementary school start to learn about Taiwan in year two. At junior high school, a course called "To Know Taiwan" (Renshi Taiwan) is introduced in the first year; students only start to learn about Chinese history in year two, followed by knowing about the world in year three (Hughes and Stone 1999). The structure of the national curriculum shows the shift of priority from Chinese cultural identity to Taiwanese identity. In some universities courses of Taiwanese history and literature have been introduced and become very popular subjects among students. In addition, graduate schools of local studies and archive centres have been founded, and more than one hundred local history and art museums were established, and a national Taiwanese museum which aims to document, collect and present Taiwanese history

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<sup>5</sup> It is according to the survey conducted by the editorial board of the *Wen-Xun Bi-Monthly*, Issue 82, 1995.

and culture is being planned.

### **2.3.2 The Architectural Preservation Movement**

The other important factor that contributed to the development of local museums is the architectural preservation movement. Professor Hsia, an expert on urban planning, who with his students has been devoted to the architectural preservation movement in Taiwan for years, provides two dimensions underlying the architectural preservation movements in Taiwan. First he thinks the architectural preservation movement is a reaction to an empty social memory in a peculiar political history. Second, the architectural preservation movement is a movement against rapid urbanisation as well as economic growth (Hsia 1997). The development of museums in the 1990s to a certain extent reflects these two dimensions as well, and many of them are the result of the architectural preservation movement. Because of rapid urbanisation, a lot of material evidence of the past has either been destroyed or lost. Therefore, the architectural preservation movement becomes important in preserving the collective social memory. To preserve historical buildings with their memories of past lifestyles and customs, the renovation and conversion of them as museums is perceived as to the best means of re-use. Since many historical buildings are small to medium sized, with the aid of the subsidy from the central government and the local cultural policy, most of them are converted and re-used as local history or art museums.

### **2.3.3 Cultural Policy**

In addition to the architectural preservation movement, cultural policy also helps in the establishment of local museums. First, the Twelve Cultural Development was launched in 1978. This plan aims to establish a cultural centre in each city and county. The purpose of the cultural centre is to provide programs and facilities for cultural activities for local residents. Twenty cultural centres have been established under this plan and in each of them, there are a library, a concert hall and an exhibition room. In 1983 the central government stipulated that each cultural centre should look for local culture and promote it by establishing a local thematic museum to represent it (Chen 1997a). With subsidies from the central government and under management of the

local cultural centre, fourteen thematic museums had been established by 2000 and four more are still under consideration<sup>6</sup>. This is the first wave of the development of local museums, promoted and subsidized by the central government.

Another cultural policy, though less direct, is influential in the establishment of community museums. In 1994, the Council for Cultural Affairs, launched a Community Empowerment Project. As the project leader, Chen Chi-Nan points out: “The main purpose of the project is to solve problems” (Chen, 1995). What are the problems to be solved? They are the consequences of rapid economic and political development. First of all, Taiwan has faced similar problems as other developing countries. That is, in order to pursue rapid economic growth, natural resources have been exploited and the traditional cultural heritage has been neglected. The process of rural to urban migration has caused the decline of many rural communities. While enjoying the fruits of economic growth, people in Taiwan have suffered from air pollution, environmental degradation and cultural neglect. Secondly, following the lifting of martial law in 1987, Taiwan has witnessed a process of democratisation, yet this has had little impact on the cultural milieu in Taiwanese society. Li points out that although the social movements re-distributed economic and political resources through the transformation of legislation and administration, this change is not enough since it neglects the cultural behaviours and social relationships among people (Li 1998: 8). The cultural behaviours include people’s indifference to public affairs and lack of concern with the community and environment in which they live. Thus, it is believed that after political transformation, the implementation of the Community Empowerment Project is necessary. It aims to tackle social issues by cultural means. Its purpose is to transform the relationship among people, and between people and the environment by enhancing community consciousness (Li 1998; Mu 1996). Under this project the Council for Cultural Affairs subsidized local governments to assist local communities in finding, shaping and keeping their lost craft traditions. As a result, some museums have been built because of this driving force. The case study of

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<sup>6</sup> It is according to the Cultural Statistics published by Council for Cultural Affairs, Executive Yuan, R.O.C, 2002.

founding of the Bai-mi Clog Museum is a result of this project.

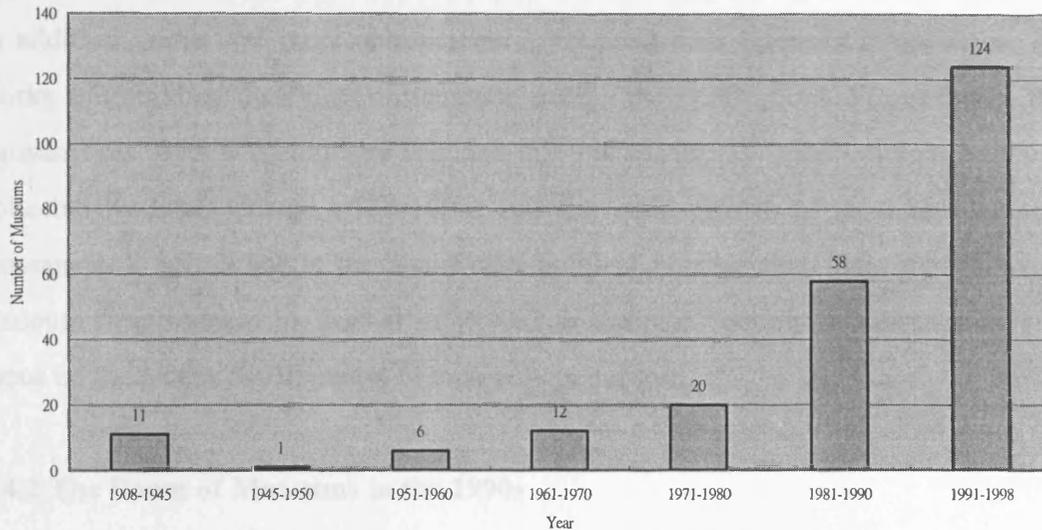
## **2.4 The Development of Local Museums in Taiwan**

### **2.4.1 Brief History of Museum Development in Taiwan**

To understand the development of local museums in Taiwan, it is necessary briefly to review the history of museum development in Taiwan. First, the concept of ‘museum’ was brought into Taiwan by Japan after 1895 (Tseng 2001). Before that, there were no museums in Taiwan. The history of museum development in Taiwan can be divided into three phases. The first period is the Japanese colonial period ranging from 1895-1945; the museum built in this period was the Taiwan Museum. Its main function was to collect the artefacts of aboriginal peoples and the species of plants and animals on this island, so the data might provide knowledge and useful information for the colonial governance. Since Taiwan was the first colony of the Japanese Empire, the colonial government wished to establish a museum to “introduce the information and reality of the new territory to the people in Japan, as well as to boast the success of the colonial governing to the world” (Li 1997: 245). The second phase was from 1949-1975, under the reign of Chiang Kai-shek. During this period, the National Palace Museum and National Museum of History were founded to collect artefacts and works of fine art brought back from Mainland China. The main purpose was to display the great Chinese culture and enhance political hegemony by forging the Chinese cultural identity. So in this period, Taiwanese culture was regarded as a part of Chinese culture. In the 1980s, partly because of the increase of wealth, and partly because of the diverse demands from society, there was a steady growth of museums. More and more municipal and national museums were founded including the Taipei Fine Art Museum in 1983 and the National Museum of Natural Science in 1986 (Hsiao 1995).

Though providing a brief history of the development of museums in Taiwan, Hsiao’s research does not investigate the rapid growth of local museums in the 1990s. As Yui-Tan Chang points out that there was a boom in museums in Taiwan in the 1990s

(Chang 1998). According to the statistics surveyed in 1998, there are two hundred and thirty-two museums in Taiwan and the number has been growing in the last few years<sup>7</sup>. More than one hundred museums were founded in the 1990s. The rapid growth of museums is shown in Figure 3.



**Fig. 3: The Number of Museums Built in Each Decade in Taiwan**

(Sources: [www.cam.org.tw/3-profession/statistics-data/01establish.htm](http://www.cam.org.tw/3-profession/statistics-data/01establish.htm), Cultural Affairs 2002)

Figure 3 shows that the museum industry in Taiwan started during the Japanese colonial period. After the KMT regime took over Taiwan, there was a period of time during which the number of museums grew slowly partly because of political upheaval and economic hardship and partly because cultural development was not high on the government's agenda. From 1945 to 1970, the number of new museums grew slowly; only nineteen museums were established during this period of time. Hu indicates that not until the 1970's did the museum development in Taiwan start to take off (Hu 1998). It was a time when more artists and writers devoted themselves to native literature, meanwhile more native Taiwanese were allowed to take political

<sup>7</sup> It is according to the Cultural Statistics published by Council for Cultural Affairs, Executive Yuan, R.O.C, 2002.

positions in the central government. More budgets were devoted to cultural development when the central government commenced the Twelve National Plan, which set out to build a public cultural centre in each county and city in Taiwan. In 1980's, fuelled by rapid economic growth, the development of all kinds of museums expanded. First, most public cultural centres were opened during this period of time. In addition, more and more entrepreneurs expanded their interests in collecting art works and building their own museums to exhibit their collections. For example, the Taiwan Folk Arts Museum was founded in 1984 to display the aboriginal artefacts collected by S.M. Chang. The 1990s saw the rapid growth of local museums in Taiwan took off. What is the social and political context that fuels the boom in museum development in Taiwan in 1990s? In the next section, my discussion will focus on the recent development of museums in Taiwan.

#### 2.4.2 The Boom of Museums in the 1990s

In the past decade, the most startling phenomenon is that a large number of local and small museums were founded. From 1990 to 1998, more than one hundred and twenty- four museums were established. In general, the total number of museums in Taiwan increased swiftly during the 1980's and it reached a peak in the 1990s, as is shown in Figure 4.

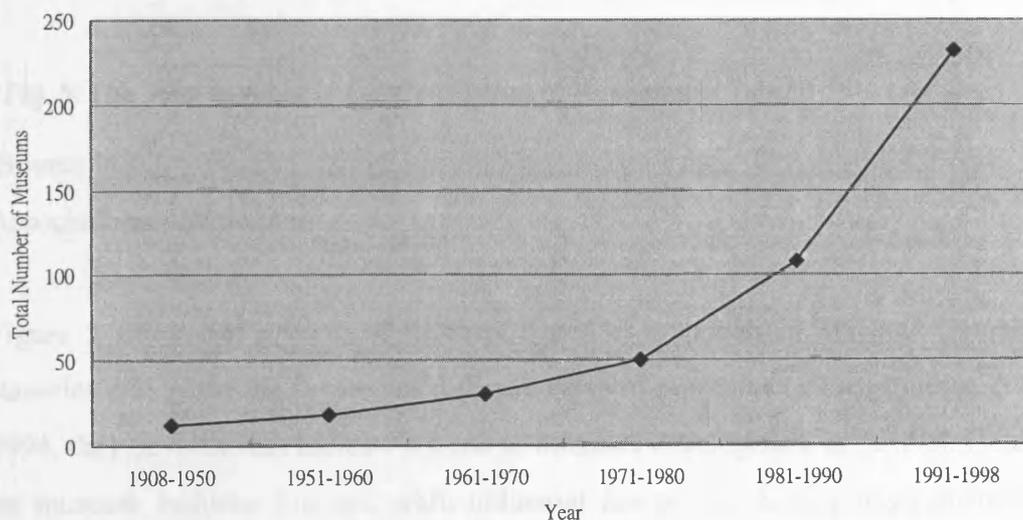


Fig. 4: The Growth of Total Number of Museums in Taiwan

In 1998, the total number of museums in Taiwan reached two hundred and thirty-two (Chang 1998). Many of them are specialised museums, whose collections vary from traditional Taiwanese puppets, clogs and glass works to specimens such as fossils, butterflies and crabs. Museums or galleries in memory of particular artists also emerge. For national museums, only a few were established, such as the Kaohsiung Fine Art Museum in 1993. The museums in Taiwan are divided into four different types in general: art, history, science and comprehensive museums. The total number of different types of museums in Taiwan is shown in Figure 5.

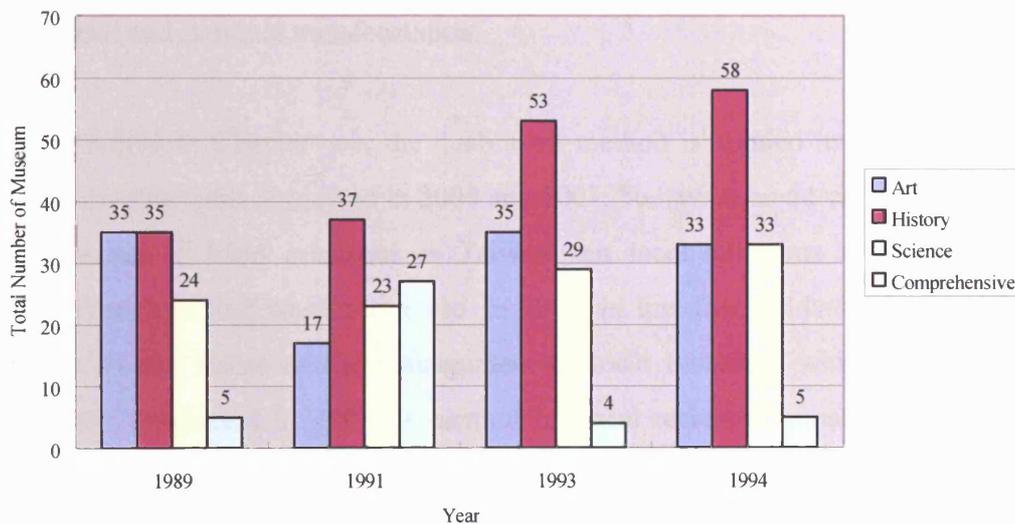


Fig. 5: The Total Number of Different Types of Museums in Taiwan

(Source: <http://www.cam.org.tw/3-profession/statistics-data/08type.htm>, Chinese Association of Museums)

Figure 5 shows the growth of different types of museums in Taiwan. Though the statistics only show the number of different types of museums in Taiwan from 1989 to 1994, they nevertheless indicate a trend in museum development in general. Here, the art museum includes fine art, craft, industrial design; the history museum includes history of civilization, anthropology, folk, archaeology and memorial museums. Science refers to those museums that exhibit technology, geography, animals, insects, and agriculture, while comprehensive museum refers to those museums which display

more than one type of exhibit such as art and science. Figure 5 shows that the number of history and science museums keeps growing. The number of history museums increases especially rapidly. On the other hand, the number of art and comprehensive museums shows no significant change in those years. The number of art museums even decreases in 1991. History museums, on the other hand, have been growing rapidly and become the largest group of museums in Taiwan. Several factors have contributed to the growth of local museums in the last decade such as the rise of local culture, the influence of the architectural preservation movement and the support of governmental cultural policy, as mentioned before. This trend first and foremost reflects the people's growing interest in understanding local history and culture along with social and political transformation.

As mentioned in Chapter one, the qualitative method is applied in the research and two fieldworks were conducted in 2000 and 2001. To have a broad view of the current development of local museums in Taiwan, ten local museums were visited and thirteen museum staff was interviewed in 2000. In this first fieldwork, the interview focuses on the issues of the management of local museums while in the second fieldwork, conducted in 2001, is centred on local residents' museum experiences. From a literature review and interview data collected in 2000, four characteristics in the development of local museums in Taiwan emerge. First, the local government has played a leading role in this development. Secondly, more new concepts and ideas of museum management are introduced and adopted. Thirdly, there is a trend to re-use the historical buildings as museums. Fourthly, the development of local museums is closely connected with the construction of identity and collective memories through the presentation of local culture. In the following section, the context and characteristics of the development of local museums will be examined in detail.

#### **2.4.3 The Role of Local Government**

First, the boom in museums in 1990s Taiwan is closely connected with the rise of the architectural preservation movement as well as the autonomy of local government. The small and middle-sized museums built in the last decade comprise various types

of museums and many of them focus on local history, folk art and customs. “It is a feverish boom”, as Yui-tan Chang describes it (Chang 1998). The boom, however, should not be regarded as an isolated phenomenon in pursuit of fashion. Researchers have indicated that the establishment of new museums is closely intertwined with democratic progress and the formation of the modern state (Bennett 1995; Evans 1999). If we examine the recent development of museums in Taiwan, their expansion coincides with the rapid social transformation and parallels a process of political democratisation. In the past, the central government played a leading role in museum development in Taiwan; all public museums, national as well as local, are subsidised, planned and monitored by the central government. It was also under the cultural policy launched by the central government that local government started to build museums to exhibit local culture in the 1980s. For example, fourteen local museums have been established under the plan “Founding the Local Thematic Museums” initiated and subsidized by central government and run by local government.

However in the 1990s, along with the rising autonomy of local government, more projects to establish local museums have been initiated and managed by local government, scholars and entrepreneurs. Local communities along with local government and scholars have their own agenda and ideas about the museums that best represent their own culture. Politically, from 1989 people started to elect their own city and county mayors, entitled to do so by the constitution after the lifting of martial law. As a result local mayors have more autonomy than before to decide the direction and management of local cultural affairs. Also, since local mayors are elected by their constituencies, they are more responsive to people’s interests and under more pressure to carry out their election promises. The cultural agenda has become one of the main issues that concern people. Taking the I-Lan county as an example, more candidates from DPP, who emphasise Taiwanese culture and independence, were elected. Since mayors from the DPP have governed I-Lan for more than twenty years, cultural policy has ensured that I-Lan has become a county greatly promoting Taiwanese as well as local I-Lan culture.

In addition, the upgrading of local cultural centres as bureaus of culture at the end of 1999 and in early 2000 signifies the greater autonomy of local government in local cultural affairs. In the past, though playing a central role in promoting local cultural affairs, culture centres were regarded as third grade institutions of local government. As pointed out, cultural centres were under multiple supervisions and had very little autonomy. Politically, they were under the administration of local government's Bureau of Education, however, in reality, they were under the supervision of the Council for Cultural Affairs, Administrative Yuan of the central government. For decades, it is not clear whether the cultural centres were cultural or educational institutions. What is more, though the budget of the cultural centres was mainly from local government, most of the time, they followed the cultural policy set by the central government. The low status and multiple supervision of cultural centres has long been questioned by scholars (Liao 1995).

Along with increasing demands to develop and promote local culture in the 1990s, cultural centres started to play a leading role in the development of local cultural affairs, regardless of its low status in the administrative ladder. In these circumstances, the change in the status of cultural centres became imperative. On June 15, 1999, twenty-one representatives from cultural centres went to central government in protest against a new law drafted to make cultural centres second grade institutions of local government (Wang 1999). After the petition, the central government authorised that each local government could decide whether to change the status of its cultural centre or not, as well as the law they should be administrated in the future.<sup>8</sup> By the end of 2000 most counties and cities had set up a bureau of culture. As a result, more work has been transferred to the bureaus of culture, such as the management of heritage and the documentation of local studies. Though as pointed out, there is greater workload after upgrading, the personnel structure and number of staff has not increased

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<sup>8</sup> According to the interview with the former director of the I-Lan County Cultural centre, Lin, De-fu, carried out on April, 26, 2000. There are three different ways of upgrading the cultural centre as the bureau of culture. The first way is simply to change the cultural centre into a bureau of culture. The second way is to set up a bureau of culture, independent of the administration of local government, with the original cultural centre belonging to the new established bureau of culture. The third way is to set the bureau of culture under the administration of local government.

accordingly (Ding 1999). However, director Hong thinks it is a positive move for the management of local cultural affairs. She indicates: "After the establishment of the bureau of culture, it gives us an identity, a name and a status given by law"<sup>9</sup> Therefore, the promotion of cultural centres from third grade institution to first grade institution of local government helps to clarify the status and role of cultural centres. It also grants local government more autonomy and authority in the administration of local cultural affairs. Under this trend, local government has replaced central government in playing a leading role in the development of museums.

#### **2.4.4 The Influence of Museological Concepts**

Following the rapid growth in the number of local museums, the demand for knowledge of museum management and for professionals became imperative. During the interviews several museum directors and staff pointed out that the difficulty they encounter most is lack of museum knowledge and professional staff<sup>10</sup>. Most small and local museums are run by civil servants and enthusiastic volunteers; many of them have no training in museum management. To solve this problem local governments work with scholars and museum professionals to develop new schemes to deliver better management of small and local museums. Under these circumstances, new concepts and ideas of museum management were introduced. Among them the ideas about the community museum and the ecomuseum were introduced in the 1990s and have been most influential in the development of local museums in Taiwan. Before reviewing how these concepts were imported into Taiwan, it is necessary to briefly review the development of the idea of the community museum and the ecomuseum.

The Anacostia Neighbourhood Museum is believed to be the first community museum in the world, established with the help of the National Museum of History and Technology in Washington (Hudson 1987: 179). Appointed as the first Director, Kinard documented the process of founding the Anacostia Neighbourhood Museum

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<sup>9</sup> The interview with Director Hong, Hui-guan, Hsinchu Municipal Bureau of Culture, carried out on April 19, 2000.

<sup>10</sup> Several interviewees expressed that what they need most is the professional knowledge and assistance. Interview with the museum staff of the I-Lan Museum of Local Political History on April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2000. Interview with the museum staff of the Peitou Hot Springs Museum on April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2000.

and explored the theory of the community museum. He believes that the museum should take more responsibility in tackling social issues by a new way of thinking (Kinard 1985). Emphasising the participation of local residents and the pivotal role of the environment, the concept of the ecomuseum expands the traditional definition of the museum from a building into an ecological area covering several villages, natural resources and all the people who live in the area. Though similar to the idea of the open-air museum which was first established in Skansen, Sweden, the ecomuseum emphasises preserving the buildings, the natural resources and encouraging people to remain within the original site instead of moving them and constructing an artificial site. The whole concept of the ecomuseum, breaking the traditional idea of the museum centering on collection and exhibition, is revolutionary and influential. As Hubert points out: "The originality of the ecomuseum is the astonishing capacity it has shown for catching up with its own day, for confronting the present in order to offer it a new humanism over and above the image it reflects. The ecomuseum, like other kinds of the museum that came into being at the same time or a little earlier completely undermined the notion of the universal museum that is fixed in time and space" (Hubert 1985:189-90). Under the definition of ecomuseum, any town, city or even a state could be an ecomuseum. The ecomuseum not only breaks the tangible walls of the museum but it also dissolves the intangible boundary between the museum professional and lay people. As is pointed out, to manage such a huge museum area requires the integration of various disciplines (Kjell 1985: 206-207).

In the late 1980s in response to the rapid growth of museums in Taiwan and the increasing demand for museum professionals, museum studies came under the national scholarship scheme supported by the government. Under this scheme, at least one student is sent abroad to take museum studies every year. In addition, senior museum staff also gets the opportunity to study abroad sponsored by the Council for Cultural Affairs, Administrative Yuan. As a result, a number of scholars brought back the idea of the community museum and the ecomuseum in the early 1990s. In 1993, the first postgraduate school of museum studies was founded in Tainan, southern Taiwan with one scholar who had graduated with a Ph.D degree from the Department

of Museum Studies of the University of Leicester, along with other scholars from the fields of art history, architecture and archaeology. They exchanged museological ideas developed in the western world and introduced them to Taiwan through the *Museology Quarterly* and the projects in which they participated. For example, in 1993 there was a special issue on ‘The Museum and Community’ in the *Museology Quarterly* in which experiences drawn from Britain, Canada and United States were introduced and discussed (National Museum of Natural Science 1993). Published in a major museum journal, the articles were widely read and circulated among the museum community in Taiwan.

Influenced by the concepts of the community museum and ecomuseum, museum workers in I-Lan firstly proposed the idea that the whole of I-Lan should be a museum. With limited budgets and manpower, innovative strategies were applied to realise the vision. In 1997 the I-Lan Museum preparation office was founded by the I-Lan County government. With a plan to build a comprehensive museum to exhibit the culture of I-Lan, the preparation office also works as a resource centre to connect small museums in I-Lan as the ‘I-Lan museum family’ to provide and share information among members. By so doing, it is hoped that I-Lan county itself will become a museum, full of treasures and memories of I-Lan people (Lu 2001:13). I-Lan county government is not the only local government that promotes local culture by establishing more museums. With the rising interest in the preservation of historical buildings and in collecting and exhibiting local culture, two museums, the Hsinchu Municipal Image Museum and the Hsinchu Municipal Glass Museum have been established by Hsinchu Municipal government. In both cases refurbished historical buildings have been reused as museums. More than ten similar projects such as the local history museum, the fire fighters’ museum and the rice noodle museum are being planned and are scheduled to be opened. Learning from the experience of I-Lan county, the Hsinchu Municipal Bureau of Culture has also launched a similar project, called the ‘Hsinchu museum group’, to connect and support the museums in Hsinchu.

Although the idea of the community museum and ecomuseum is still in its infancy in Taiwan, these ideas are influential and inspire innovative ideas for the management of local museums (see the case study of the Bai-mi Clog Museum in Chapter Four). With limited budgets and manpower more new ideas are being explored and flexible strategies are being developed by local museums.

#### **2.4.5 The Re-use of Historical Buildings as Museums**

To understand the characteristics and management of the small and middle-sized museums in Taiwan, a survey was conducted in 1997. In this survey, the characteristics of small and middle-sized museums are divided into four types in terms of the use of space (Chen 1997a: 8-12):

1. The refurbishment of old buildings
2. The use of spare floors in commercial towers or university buildings
3. The thematic museums built in cultural centres
4. The individually purpose - built specialised museums

First, except from a few museums supported by entrepreneurs<sup>11</sup>, most museums housed in historical buildings are publicly funded and managed by the public sector since the possession and maintenance of historical buildings are expensive. Many private museums and galleries belong to the second type because of limited budgets – for example, the Lee, Tze Fan Fine Art Museum is managed by the Lee family and is housed in a tower building. The thematic museums founded and managed by local cultural centres are all specialised museums featuring local culture. In the 1980s, due to the limited budget, many of them are housed in spare rooms of the existing cultural centres. However, in the 1990s, with the rise of interest in local culture along with the architectural preservation movement, the space spared from cultural centre was not

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<sup>11</sup> For example, the Lu-gang Folk Museum, the first folk museum in Taiwan, was founded and housed in a historical building owned by the wealthy Gu family in 1973. Another similar case is the Taiwan Folk Arts Museum, which was established in 1984 and housed in a historical building in Peitou area, Taipei. The museum was founded and is supported by Fu Lu Culture and Education Foundation endowed by industrialist, S.M. Chang. They are the forerunners of re-using historical buildings as museums in Taiwan.

enough. There was more demand for exhibition space. The trend has been to build new purpose - built new museums to display private collections. These include private museums supported by entrepreneurs, such as the Shung Ye Museum of Formosan Aborigines and public museums supported by central or local government such as the Taipei County Yingko Ceramics Museum. Due to the nature of the research, the discussion will focus on the museums which are housed in the renovated buildings. The private museums and galleries founded by the entrepreneurs are not discussed in the present research.

As indicated, many museums of the first type are the result of the architectural preservation movement. That is to say, there was no such idea of re-using historical buildings to establish museums at the beginning; the idea of re-using them as museums only came after the architectural preservation movement. These museums are usually designed according to the characteristics of the historical buildings or to present an exhibition of the history and culture of the local community. Q-C Chang in his research divides the re-use of historical building into three phases: the early pre-1980 phase, the second phase from 1980-1990 and the recent development after 1990 (Chang 2000b). In the first phase, due to the government's neglect of cultural development, there were only seven historical buildings reused as museums. In the second phase, some government officials went to Japan and brought back the idea of establishing one local folk museum in each county and township, however it was not until the 1990s, with the support of both central and local government and the rise of the architectural preservation movement, that there was growth of any size in the number of the re-use of historical buildings (Chang 2000b: 6-11).

As pointed out, the preservation of historical buildings can be seen as producing two kinds of public history. First, it is the presentation of architectural history. Secondly, the buildings can tell visitors stories about "who made them, who used them, what kind of life they were erected to support, and what lives, if any, are lived in them today" (Cromley 1987: 30). In addition, to re-use historical buildings as museums, a third layer of meaning is created – a creative reinterpretation of the historical

buildings and the collective memories of local history and culture are created and constructed within the museum exhibition. In this research, five museums chosen as five case studies are all housed in renovated historical buildings. Though most museums housed in historical buildings are run by local authorities, there is great input from and participation of local communities and societies in the process of preservation of historical houses and re-using them as museums. The museum, therefore, become a meeting place of people's memories, reinterpreting history and constructing identities.

#### **2.4.6 The Construction of Cultural Identity**

As indicated, the rapid development of local museums in the last decade firstly reflects people's increasing interests in exhibiting their own culture through the preservation of material culture. Kavanagh summarises Sheldon Annis' idea of the function of the museum and indicates that there are three symbolic spaces overlapping when visitors come to the museums: cognitive, pragmatic (social) and dream spaces. Visitors to the museum not only acquire information about the museum exhibitions but also play out their roles and recollect their memories (Kavanagh 2000: 2-3). As indicated, among all types of museums, the growth of history museums has been swift. In the history museum, imagination about the customs and lifestyles in the past is interwoven with the information that the museum provides. The historical building that has been a landmark for the community provides a space for recollection and comparison of the lifestyles of the past and the present. Underlying the boom in the development of museums, there is passion of people's pursuit of cultural identities. After decades of political and cultural suppression, it is pressing for people to discover and recover lost memories, to understand their locality and their history and more importantly their own role and identity.

Though people recollect individually, as a public institution the museum provides a space, a meeting ground and narrative for the construction of collective memories and identities. Some museum professionals also have the idea of making the museum a place for recollection and construction of identity when they make plans about the

construction and management of the museum. The former director of the Taipei 228 Memorial Museum, Yeh Bo-Wen pointed out the grief of loss of identity and subjectivity of Taiwanese people in the past decades. He expressed his reflections in the historical context of Taiwan: "The whole history of Taiwan is desolate. People have no subjectivity; it is changed according to changes of different regimes. It is sad that peoples' identities are changing".<sup>12</sup> He believes therefore that the establishment of the Taipei 228 Memorial Museum is significant; it helps visitors to understand their past in a national scale. He said: "It is similar to the establishment of the community museum. Why do we need community museums? It is for the community empowerment, isn't it? If you change the community to the nation, it is the same meaning".<sup>13</sup> In a similar vein, the director of I-Lan County Bureau of culture, Lin, De-fu emphasises the importance of forming and constructing people's identity. He indicates: "The identity is based on the common life experiences and history. The I-Lan County is aimed to be a cultural county by passing on life experience and history on this earth to next generation. Through this connection, they will love the locality".<sup>14</sup>

Just as the ideas about museums change, so the role of museums in Taiwan is changing. In the past, the museums were more central, academic and research oriented. Now they are more local and community centred. The themes have also shifted from the display of Chinese culture to the collection of local culture. This recent development not only reflects the global zeal toward preserving and cultivating local culture, it also indicates an effort to reinterpret Taiwanese history, an attempt to construct new cultural identities and people's great interest in local and Taiwanese history enabling them to search and construct their cultural identities in the new era.

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<sup>12</sup> The interview with the former director of the Taipei 228 Memorial Museum, carried out on April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2000.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> The interview with Director Lin, De-fu carried out on April 26, 2000.

## **2. 5 Conclusion**

In this chapter the social and political background of Taiwan before and after 1987 has been presented to set the context for the discussion of the museum development in the 1990s. In the 1990s, following a series of social movements and transformation triggered by the lifting of martial law in 1987, there was a boom in the development of museums in Taiwan, especially local history museums. To examine this phenomenon, it is argued that three reasons - the rise of local culture, the architectural preservation movement and cultural policy - have contributed to the rapid growth of museums in Taiwan. In the last part of the chapter, a short history of the development of museums in Taiwan is reviewed. Then it focuses on the rapid development of museums in the 1990s, and the characteristics of this wave are further analysed. From literature review and interview data, it is believed that the rapid growth of local museums not only reflects the increasing autonomy of local government, the results of the architectural preservation movement and the influence of new museological concepts, and more importantly, it demonstrates people's interests in local culture in pursuit of construction of the cultural identities.

# Chapter 3 Methodology

## **Introduction**

This chapter provides an overview of the methodological approaches applied in this research. The first section of this chapter describes the objectives of the research. The second section reviews the literature of visitor studies and examines the nature of qualitative study. The last section outlines how the fieldwork was conducted and gives details of the steps by which the research was carried out. The methodology applied in the research is qualitative in nature and numerous methods have been employed such as multiple-case studies, in-depth interviews and participant observation as appropriate to the research objectives.

### **3.1 Research Objectives**

The subject of my research is the cultural identity of communities in Taiwan, seen through the perspective of their museum visiting. Therefore, the historical and cultural viewpoint of visitors is my main concern. The ideas of the museum staff, influencing the direction of the museum management will also be discussed. The research will also sketch the changing nature of the museum community in the context of the post-1987 Taiwanese society, in order to provide an overview of the recent development in museums in Taiwan.

The research first seeks to provide a socio-cultural analysis of contemporary Taiwanese society since 1987 on the basis of a broad review of literature, as discussed in Chapter Two. Special attention has been paid to theories and current debates on national identity, the preservation movement, and local cultural policies. By so doing, it sketches the recent social transformation of Taiwanese society and a brief history of the development of local museums in the 1990s. However, from literature review, it is not able to give the detailed accounts of visitors' experiences in the museum. As mentioned, this research not only intends to discuss the background and development of local museums in Taiwan but also aims to exploring how local visitors interpret the

exhibits and respond to historical sites in relation to the construction of their cultural identities. To provide a comprehensive and systematic picture of the contemporary development of local museums in relation to the issue of cultural identity, the methodology of qualitative research is applied in order to fill some gaps in my knowledge of local residents' museum experiences. The area of the research is a recent phenomenon, and there exists very limited research. The discipline of museum studies as well as the development of local museums in Taiwan is still in its infancy; systematic research and analysis based on primary data are inadequate. Unsurprisingly, due to limited resources, most research has been conducted in national museums. Thus before investigating visitors' experiences in relation to their cultural identity, it is necessary to get some primary background information.

A preliminary study aimed at understanding the recent development of local museums in Taiwan was conducted in April 2000. A covering letter was first sent to get the permission for carrying out the research (See Appendix 1). Ten local museums were visited; eleven museum staff and two directors of cultural centres were interviewed. The interviews were semi-structured and covered their ideas of museum management, the problems they faced and their views of recent changes (See Appendix 2). All interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed; some internal documents were also collected during my research. These form the primary data and provide background knowledge towards an understanding of recent development of local museums in Taiwan.

From the data I collected in the preliminary study, I have identified certain features of the newly established local authority museums and discussed and presented in the previous chapter. Many of local museums are housed in renovated historical buildings built in the Japanese colonial period, and feature in the collection of local history. As mentioned, this reflects not only the result of the preservation movement but also a rise of local culture. With limited funding and resources, they rely heavily on the support of volunteers from the communities. Most of the museum staff whom I interviewed also identified the establishment of the local authority museum as closely

connected with the local cultural policy influenced by nativism. The main subject of my research is the cultural identity of people in Taiwan, therefore the historical and cultural viewpoint of museum staff is also my principal concern in the preliminary study, which I believe will influence the direction of museum management.

Apart from the viewpoints of the museum staff, as the communication model suggests, the meanings and experiences are not only influenced by the team of communicators, visitors are active meaning-makers (See Fig.1, page 14). From the analysis of data of the preliminary study, I find the way in which my interviewees' interpret and respond to history interests me most, since it is a key element in how people define, and locate themselves, and thus construct their identity. I also find that interesting opinions and information usually come from unexpected and unstructured conversation. This finding has helped me design my subsequent research method, using mainly semi-structured interviews with certain prompts to assist interviewees to express their own experiences freely. Following Mason's guide, a protocol was first drawn up listing the issues and questions I wanted to examine, and from this list I devised methods which would enable me to gather data accordingly (Mason 1996: 22-3).

The Research Protocol	Visitors	Museum Staff	Document	Observation
<b>1. What kind of museum experience do local residents have?</b>				
Object Experience: Sensual experience	√			
Cognitive Experience: what information or knowledge do visitors have?	√			
Introspective Experience: what collective memories are recalled or constructed through visiting the museum?	√			
Social Experience: what social relationships are portrayed in the museum?	√			
<b>2. How do local museums construct history?</b>				
What is the story (narrative) of the exhibition?		√	√	√
How do visitors interpret exhibits? Do they agree with the museum story?	√	√		
How do visitors and museum staff locate the artefacts in a historical framework? Do they consider them as part of Chinese culture or Taiwanese culture?	√	√		
What are their views about Taiwanese culture or local culture?	√	√	√	
What are visitors' and museum staff's historical views in general? Are they changed or enhanced through visiting the museum?	√	√		
<b>3. Do people enhance their sense of individual local identities through visiting museums?</b>				
What is the role of people from the community in the founding and running of local museums?	√	√	√	√

What are their opinions about the rise of local museums?	√	√		
What are their views about the renovation of historical buildings as museums?	√	√		
What does 'heritage' mean to them?	√	√		

<b>4. Social political issues</b>				
What are their views about the Japanese colonial government?	√	√		
In comparison, what are their views about the nationalist government and the current government ?	√	√		
What are their views towards the other ethnic groups?	√	√		
<b>5. How do local museums contribute to the rise of cultural nativism?</b>				
Under what cultural policy was the local museum founded?		√	√	√
Under what ideology and political forces are museum founded & managed?		√	√	√
What are the mission statement and collection policy?		√	√	

**Table 1: The Research Protocol**

From this protocol, various methods of data collection are needed to investigate the topic. Since the research question in the thesis is how visitors from the local communities make meaning and construct their cultural identities from museum visiting, it is fundamental to explore and comprehend their experience. Although documents, literature review and the data from the preliminary study give me a direction and the background information of my research, however, these do not provide sufficient meaningful portrayal of visitors' actions and reflections upon their

experience. Thus, a review of the literature of visitor studies is necessary to design the research methods for further data collection.

### **3.2 A Review of Visitor Studies**

Researchers of museum studies have been interested in the experiences of museum visitors and what they learn, and various approaches have been used to understand this. Firstly, a large amount of research has been conducted by museums and other public agencies mostly using surveys in both the United Kingdom and United States (Nichols 1990). The main purpose of their research is to get to know their visitors better by identifying some of the issues such as the correlation between age and visiting. In general, visiting decreases with age and increases with the level of education (Bourdieu, Darbel, and Schnapper 1990; Hooper-Greenhill 1994). Different variations such as the physical context of the museum and visitors' agendas are also under examination to see how they influence the experience of museum visits (Falk and Dierking 1992; Falk, Moussouri, and Coulson 1998). Other research focuses on the learning outcomes of museum visits and different approaches have been devised to evaluate these. For example McManus conducted research to investigate visitors' memories as indicators of their learning outcomes, nine months after their museum visit. She concludes that visitors do clearly remember their visits long afterwards, and most memories are about objects and also about events, such as family outing and meeting with people (McManus 1993). Different from the traditional learning theory which focuses on the input of the subject to be learned, recent learning theory, most importantly the constructivist theory, emphasises that visitors are active agents who make their own meanings out of their visit (Hein 1995). The visiting experience is thus no longer regarded as a passive learning process but an active process of meaning-making. Silverman thus proposes meaning-making as the paradigm to understand visitors' experience in the museum, and suggests that self-identity, companions, and leisure motivations and benefits are three critical factors (Silverman 1993; Silverman 1995).

In general, there is a shift from demographic research to naturalistic evaluation, from the quantitative survey to qualitative research. Visitors no longer represent some abstract objective numbers in terms of age, sex and job but they are themselves active agents who communicate and interpret the objects and material cultural with varied knowledge background, personal interests, and different social class perspectives (Hooper-Greenhill 1995). As a result, researchers become more aware of the various components that construct the interactions and meaning-making processes of museum visiting. Drawing from hermeneutic and constructivist theories, Hooper-Greenhill points out: “The meanings constructed from information and experience emerge from a complex network of mediation. Personal interpretations are forged through social and cultural environments, through local communities and through location in social structures” (Hooper-Greenhill 1999: 5). To further understand the phenomenon, the qualitative approach “which involves understandings of complexity, detail and context” is therefore needed (Mason 1996: 4). The nature of qualitative study is that “(t)he researcher attempts to capture data on the perception of local actors ‘from the inside,’ through a process of deep attentiveness, of empathetic understanding” (Miles and Huberman 1994: 6). Unlike the quantitative study which investigates a phenomenon by a more distant and structured approach, qualitative research is more open and ideographic. The scope of research is also different. The former tends to testify and generalise theory from a large amount of data gathered from a larger population; the latter investigates and generates theory from certain subjects or cases in a particular environment (Bryman 1988: 94-101). To delve into the complicated issue of visitors’ experience of museum visiting in relation to their cultural identity, the qualitative approach, which provides insights into subjects researched, is therefore more appropriate to the objectives of the present research.

### **3.3 Research Design and Methods**

The interview design aims to investigate the interaction between the frequent visitors and local museums. What the present research is concerned with is the visitors’ personal cognitive and introspective experiences in relation to the museum visiting.

To achieve the objectives, several methods are applied in the thesis. First, to contextualise the research question, the case study method is applied. Secondly, in each case, the techniques of direct observation, participant observation and in-depth interviewing are employed. I will explain each method and the rationale for its selection in detail in the following sections.

### **3.3.1 Design and Selection of Case Studies**

In Yin's definition, case study is a research strategy rather than a particular method or technique (Yin 1994:13 ). It is a strategy that is widely applied by social scientists who are interested in the "particularity and complexity of a single case" (Stake 1995: xi). It is suitable for investigating a contemporary issue and provides a holistic view of a real-life event; at the same time, it allows careful investigation of a case by combining different methods and collecting multiple sources (Yin 1994). In the field of museum studies, in order to understand the nature and performance of the museum, the strategy of employing a particular museum or exhibition as a case study is prevalent. However, the case study and the qualitative research are very often criticised as "weak on cross-comparisons because they often study only single situations, organizations and institutions" (Strauss 1987). To avoid this weakness, as well as to better answer the objectives of my research, multiple case studies will be employed, because the purpose of such method is to "study a number of cases jointly in order to inquire into the phenomenon, population, or general condition" (Stake 1995: 237). To understand how visitors interpret and construct their cultural identities in the museum, an individual case study is insufficient for the phenomena I intend to explore. By exploring multiple cases, I hope that my study will supplement the quantitative data of the present research on the identity issue, and add to the knowledge of the development of contemporary local museums in Taiwan.

The usual reason for choosing a case is its particularity and uniqueness (Stake 1995), but it is also suggested by others that the criteria for selecting cases should be based on theoretical principles and cover a wider population (Silverman 2000: 105). Bryman argues that the case should be chosen for its particularity of generalisation to

a theoretical position rather than the generalisability to population (Bryman 1988: 90). In order to avoid the problems that may arise in generalisation, he also proposes three possible approaches. First, he suggests the qualitative researcher may study more than one case. Secondly, the cases should be examined by more than one researcher. Thirdly, the selection of cases should be based on a “certain cluster of characteristics” (Bryman 1988: 88-89).

Grounded in the previous discussion and my research question, the criteria of choosing cases are based on the following principles. First, they should be small to medium sized museums, founded by local government or community residents in the 1990s. Secondly, they should be located in renovated historical buildings, which associate local communities with more memories. Thirdly, the cases I choose should be located in different areas that represent different communities and local cultures. Lastly, I should have permission from the museum to conduct my research. Following these principles and the findings of my preliminary study, the five cases I choose are the I-Lan Museum of Local Political History, the Bai-mi Clog Museum, the Taipei 228 Memorial Museum, the Peitou Hot Springs Museum, and the Hsinchu Municipal Glass Museum. They are all small to medium sized museums with no more than twenty staff. In addition, these museums are all located in renovated historical buildings, and are all newly established and have been open to the public for less than five years. The main difference among them is in their themes and collections, which reflect diverse presentations of contemporary Taiwanese culture. Five cases are located in three counties of north Taiwan; two museums - the I-Lan Museum of Local Political History and the Bai-mi Clog Museum are located in I-Lan, the northeast province of Taiwan. The other two museums - the Taipei 228 Memorial Museum and the Peitou Hot Springs Museum, - are located in Taipei, the capital city. The last one is located in Hsinchu, a city which is both historical and industrial in northwest Taiwan (See appendix 3 for the location of museums). The basic information of five museums is listed in Table 2 and further details of each case will be introduced in the next chapter. By choosing five cases mainly in three different areas, I wish to draw and compare the similarities and differences in their development, and provide

explanations of how visitors interpret and construct cultural identities through these historical sites.

Information Museums	Type of Museum/ Open Year	Number of Staff	Number of Volunteer	Style/ Year of Building	Use of Architecture
The Bai-mi Clog Museum	Community/ Art Museum <b>1997</b>	3 + some part-time students	10-15	Stone House <b>(1960s)</b>	Accommodation of Taiwan Compost Company
The Peitou Hot Springs Museum	History Museum <b>1998</b>	4	50-60	Japanese <b>(1923)</b>	Public Bath House
The I-Lan Museum of Local Political History	History Museum <b>1997</b>	3	N	Japanese <b>(1906)</b>	Mayor's Residence
The Hsinchu Municipal Glass Museum	Art Museum <b>1999</b>	9	40-50	Japanese <b>(1936)</b>	Guest House of Prince of Japan
The Taipei 228 Memorial Museum	History Museum <b>1997</b>	15	60-80	Japanese <b>(1930)</b>	Broadcast Station

**Table 2: The Five Museum Case Studies**

### 3.3.2 Observation

Following the design and selection of the case studies, a letter was first sent to the museums researched in February 2001 to ask their permission for carrying out the research (See Appendix 4). On each case, one week was spent during March and April,

2001 to carry out my the fieldwork. The techniques of direct observation, participant as observer and in-depth interview were applied in my fieldwork. First, I spent one or two days observing the layout and the content of the exhibition in each museum. Photographs and observation notes were taken to document the style and interpretation in exhibitions. Museum leaflets and activity sheets were collected. These provided me with basic material for the description and discussion of each museum in Chapter Four. In addition to direct observation, the method of participant as observer was also employed. The following section focuses on the reason for choosing the method of participant as observer and explaining the process of carrying it out.

Participant as observer has long been widely employed by qualitative researchers, especially by anthropologists. The basic rule for participant as observer is to ensure that the fact that “the observer is an observer is made clear to the group from the start. The observer then tries to establish close relationships with members of the group” (Robson 1993: 197). It assists the researcher to understand the case better given insight into the interactions and behaviours of the subjects researched. This not only provides first hand data by observation but also positions the researcher as an active and reflective investigator (Mason 1996: 61-63). In general, it enables the researcher to become involved and gain a perspective “on the situations as they occur rather than on artificial situations” (Burgess 1984: 79). Though the participant as observer is one of the most common methods applied by the qualitative researcher, there are some drawbacks. First, many researchers have identified the problem concerning “the influence of the researcher on the researched” (Burgess 1984: 80). On the one hand, the participation of the researcher changes the research context and therefore might influence the behaviour of the observed; on the other hand, there is a danger that the researcher might ‘go native’. That is to say, it is possible that “the researcher loses his or her awareness of being a researcher and is seduced by the participants’ perspective” (Bryman 1988: 96). Thus the idea of being a reflective researcher, who minimizes his or her influence on the research context and carefully examines the observation notes, is essential in the approach.

The way I applied the method of participant as observer was to become a volunteer. That is to say, I assumed a voluntary job during my fieldwork in those museums which use a voluntary workforce to maintain their daily running. After getting permission from the museum, I was introduced to the voluntary team and made the status and purpose of my research clear to the other volunteers at the beginning. There are two main reasons for employing the method of participant observation and choosing to be a volunteer. First, and most importantly, it helped me to get access to my subjects in a natural context. Secondly, it helped me to establish a rapport with other volunteers and provided a good opportunity to obtain the viewpoint of the management of the museum. Here it needs to be pointed out that in the cultural context of Taiwanese society, it is relatively difficult to interview volunteers or visitors if the researcher does not create good opportunities to establish channels of communication. People easily shy away from an interviewer whom they either do not trust or regard as a sort of threatening authority. There are many reasons to explain this phenomenon. One of the reasons is that there are relatively few qualitative researchers in Taiwan and people are not familiar with their role. Another reason is that people are taught not to speak with strangers in any circumstances. Seen from this perspective, the role of volunteer helped me to break the ice and bridge the communication gap with the subjects.

In order to get contact with visitors as well as because of my lack of training, I chose the role of museum guard, who greets visitors, assists in guiding them through the museum and answers some simple questions. Preparation work, including familiarising myself with the content of exhibitions and the museum facilities, was done before starting the voluntary work. Asking for other volunteers' support also provided a good opportunity to understand the nature of their work. The technique proved to be very successful, since many visitors felt more comfortable chatting with a museum volunteer, and most volunteers that I worked with were happy to share their knowledge and experience with their co-worker. In the case of the Bai-mi Clog Museum, I have the particular benefit of staying in the Director's home, and thus

enjoyed a privilege position as participant as observer. The great advantage to me of this was that I could participate in the evening activities as well, gaining additional insight into this particular museum's way of functioning. In the next section, I will explain the design of the interview questionnaire, the method of selecting interviewees and procedure for interviewing.

### **3.3.3 Design of Qualitative Interviews**

The qualitative interview is described as a "conversation with purpose" and is "intended to refer to in-depth, semi-structured or a loosely structured form of interviewing" (Mason 1996: 38). It is one of the commonest techniques of qualitative research and is frequently employed in conjunction with the technique of participant as observer. The information gathered from the interview is very often used with the assumption that it depicts "real and accurate pictures of the respondents' selves and lives"(Fontana and Frey 2000: 646). However, it is also the case that the "interviews are not neutral tools of data gathering but active interactions between two people leading to negotiated, contextually based results" (Fontana and Frey 2000: 646). Gender, age and ethnicity of both the interviewer and respondents influence the results of the interview (Fontana et al. 2000). In principle, to get a more genuine picture of the respondents' real opinions, the "participant's perspective on the phenomenon of interest should unfold as the participant views it, not as the researcher views it" (Marshall and Rossman 1999: 108). To achieve this aim, some aspects of interviewing have been taken into account in this research. First, it is very important to establish a rapport with the subjects, so they feel free to express their true opinions. Secondly, the researcher has to avoid leading questions and refrain from imposing his or her own opinions on the respondents. Thirdly, the researcher should listen very carefully and show his or her understanding and sympathy with the respondents.

Two semi-structured questionnaires were designed separately for the visitors and museum staff to explore and test their views in relation to museum visiting (See Appendix 5). In these two questionnaires, many questions appear to overlap but the perspectives of the questions are different. The questionnaire for the museum staff

aims to understand how museum staff's views influence the exhibition and management of the museum. It also aims to explore what messages the museum staff want to communicate with visitors. The questionnaire for visitors focuses on how they respond to and communicate with museum exhibits. Here it needs to be pointed out that the researcher views volunteers as visitors in general and includes them in the visitor questionnaire. Since most of them are not involved in the museum administration or curatorial work, their point of view is taken into account as that of a visitor, though with more commitment and identity with the museum in which they work.

Now I want to explain the design of the interview questionnaire. Following my research protocol, a carefully designed questionnaire is essential to investigate these issues by qualitative interview. For a successful interview, the sequencing of questions is also very important. It is suggested that the researcher should move from more descriptive questions towards more explorative or structural questions (Burgess 1984: 110; May 1993: 118). The interview questionnaire is thus designed first to explore a visitor's experience of the museum visit. A number of researchers are investigating the visitor's experience in the museum, among them, the recent empirical survey conducted by Pekarik et al. concerning the degree of satisfaction experienced by museum visitors has been especially useful in this research. In this survey, he categories satisfying experiences into four categories: object, cognitive, introspective and social experience. This survey also finds that a higher percentage of people find the introspective experience most satisfying in the history museum, even though they did not expect that before their visit (Pekarik 1999). From this finding, it is expected that more introspective experiences will be explored in this research since three of five cases concern history museums. To build a conversation, the interview usually starts by asking visitors about their motivation for visiting the museum again. It is followed by asking about their memories of the historical building before it was restored as a museum, and then goes on to which exhibit interests them most. Through these questions, it is expected to delve into interviewee's recollections and memories.

After exploring visitors' experience in general, my purpose in the questionnaire is to investigate the historical views of visitors. I am particularly interested in examining if there has been a shift of historical view under the social and political transformations that have occurred. To answer this question, the ideas and historical views of museum staff and visitors in response to the museum building and exhibition are investigated. Apart from the Bai-mi Clog Museum, the other four museums in the research are housed in Japanese historical buildings, a simple question such as asking interviewees' views of the conversion of the Japanese historical buildings into museums will often lead to respondents reflecting upon the period of colonial history in comparison to period of nationalist government. Following this, I examine cultural identity in relation to museum visiting and investigate if people enhance their sense of local identity through visiting museums. Here the concept of culture plays a central role. I am interested in knowing how interviewees perceive and understand the content of "Taiwanese culture" and "Chinese culture". I therefore ask them in the questionnaire which museum they think most represents Taiwanese culture. I also ask them if they think Taiwanese culture is part of Chinese culture or is independent of it. These are difficult questions, however to my surprise, most interviewees were able to answer them and explain their reasons and ideas clearly with examples.

Lastly, I try to identify their social and political views through the interviews. Since it is a sensitive issue, I leave it to the last part. My hope is that through the rapport and trust established during interview, they feel free to express their true opinions. In general, I would like to understand how the interviewees perceive other ethnic groups, since this is one of the main causes of conflicts in cultural identity in contemporary Taiwanese society. In the five cases researched, though there is a small section about local history of the aboriginal in the Peitou Hot Springs Museum and the I-Lan Museum of Local Political History, there is no exhibition displaying artifacts made by aboriginal people. Therefore, I asked them if they would like to see exhibitions about aboriginal people or other ethnic groups. By this, I avoided more sensitive and direct questions concerning their views about other ethnic groups. Instead, through their descriptions and comments on other peoples' cultures, their views and attitudes

towards other ethnic groups were observed. Here, the ethnicity of the researcher played an important part in generating a trustworthy conversation and reliable data. As a Hakka by ethnicity, I grew up in the capital and spoke mainly mandarin Chinese. It is hard to tell my ethnicity. There are advantages as well as disadvantages in this. Though unable to communicate with informants in fluent Taiwanese, the Hakka people are usually regarded as a mild group of people, with little concern for politics. This position enabled me to gain the trust of both the Minnan people and mainlanders, whose political positions are very often in conflict.

In addition, I used current events to explore this issue. During my fieldwork, there was a debate on the controversial publication of the Japanese comic book “On Taiwan”. In this book, Taiwanese people are portrayed as inheriting and possessing the real Japanese spirit.<sup>15</sup> People from different ethnic groups responded to the book at two extremes. Some argued that the author is a real friend of Taiwan while others protested, trying ban him from visiting Taiwan. This event shows how people, from different ethnic backgrounds, respond to the colonial past and interpret history differently. During my interviews, this event helped to trigger many interviewees’ comments on current social and political issues.

In addition to visitors’ experience and historical views, interviews of museum staff particularly focused on current cultural policy. In the last decade, there has been a rise of nativism, which emphasises the re-discovery of folk culture, including local language, literature and artefacts. The last part of my fieldwork investigates the relationship between the museum exhibition and rising nativism. How museum staff respond to this trend and what they try to communicate to their audience is scrutinized through the interview and observation.

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<sup>15</sup> “On Taiwan”, drawn and written by Kobayashi, Yoshinori was published in 2000. In this historical comic book, he quoted from the interviews he had with leading figures in Taiwan, including the former president, Lee, Teng-Hui, and showed a very positive attitude towards Japanese colonial period, which however irritated some people in Taiwan and the Communist government in China.

### **3.3.4 Profile of Interviewees**

For each case study, I have chosen five interviewees, so the total number of interviewees is twenty-five. The rationale of sampling is based on the research questions which aim to investigate local frequent visitors' museum experience in relation to their construction of cultural identities. The rationale of sampling in this research, therefore, does not intend to represent the wider population but to provide a "close-up, detailed or meticulous view of particular units, which may constitute processes, types, categories, cases or examples which are relevant to or appear within the wider universe" (Mason 1996: 92). Based on this principle, five visitors are interviewed in each museum to provide detailed views of their museum experiences. Visitors are chosen on the basis of residence, age and frequency of visits. First of all, they must be local residents who have lived in the community or the county for more than five years. Secondly, they must be adults over twenty years old, so they have more memories of their community and are more likely to compare the past and present. They must be self-directed visitors who choose to visit the museum, and so visitors in organised groups are not included in the research. Thirdly, they must be frequent visitors who have been to the museum at least twice in the past year. Based on these principles, some variables were taken into consideration in the selection of interviews. In order to investigate how people from different social backgrounds interpret and interact with museum exhibitions, the gender, ethnicity and educational background were chosen as three main variables. Both men and woman were included. Secondly, different ethnicities and educational backgrounds were selected, though in some communities most residents are from the same ethnic group. Before the interview, I asked interviewees to fill in a form to provide basic information about themselves (See Appendix 6). By doing so, I ensured that people of different social backgrounds are presented and discussed in this research.

Based on these criteria, twenty-five persons were interviewed including ten visitors and fifteen volunteers. Interviewees are listed anonymously. To facilitate the discussion, interviewees are numbered with English letter followed by Arabic number to identify in which museum they are interviewed. For example, B-1 refers to the

participant who was interviewed in the Bai-mi Clog Museum while I-2 refers to the participant interviewed in the I-Lan Museum of Local Political History. To distinguish the museum staff from visitors, the museum staff is numbered by English letters only. For example, B-a refers to one staff interviewed in the Bai-mi Clog Museum. The interviewees with their basic information are listed in Appendix 7.

In addition, the profile of interviewees are summarised in table 3. The higher percentage of volunteers interviewed is mainly because in some cases, the community residents comprise the major proportion of volunteers in the museum. In other words, frequent visitors from the community very often choose to become volunteers in the museum. Among the interviewees, ten respondents are female and fifteen of them are male. Looking at the age range, unsurprisingly, there is a higher percentage of older people than younger people. Six of them are aged from twenty to thirty-five years, eight are aged from thirty-six to fifty, and eleven of them are aged between fifty-one and sixty-five. As for educational background, most of them have received a senior high school or college education. Three of them only received a junior high school education and another two respondents have a master degree. It reflects closely the average educational level of people in Taiwan. As the frequency of visiting, many of them have visited the museum more than five times and work as volunteers. These three set variables of interviewees are shown in the table below.

		Clog Museum	Hot Springs Museum	I-Lan Local Museum	Glass Museum	228 Museum
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Total</b>					
Male	10	3	2	4	4	3
Female	15	2	3	1	1	2
<b>Age</b>						
20-35	6	1	1	3	1	0
36-50	8	3	1	1	2	1
>50	11	1	3	1	2	4
<b>Education</b>						
Junior High	3	2	0	0	1	0
Senior High	9	2	3	1	1	2
College	11	1	1	4	3	2
Master	2	0	1	0	0	1
<b>Frequency</b>						
2	3	0	0	1	0	2
3-5	4	1	0	2	1	0
>5	18	4	5	2	4	3

**Table 3: The Profile of Interviewees (Visitors & Volunteers)**

In the questionnaire, I list all possible choices of ethnicity and various job statuses, and interviewees are able to choose as many as they like. The purpose of this is to see how people identify themselves. The reasons for their choices of ethnicity are explored in the following in-depth interview. From the questionnaires that I collected, four of them have identified themselves as volunteers as well as another job status. Therefore, eleven of them have identified themselves as volunteers and nine of them were engaged with full-time jobs. Three of them were retired, two of them were housewives and two of them are students. Another two interviewees chose others than

the listed jobs. As for ethnicity, the majority, that is sixteen of them, have identified themselves as Taiwanese. This result is in agreement with many other surveys previously conducted in Taiwan. Six of them identify themselves as Chinese and surprisingly, four of them have identified themselves as “new Taiwanese”- a new term invented in mid-1990s by the former president, Lee, Teng-hui. Only three have identified themselves as Minnan people and two as mainlanders. Since many of them have identified with more than one ethnicity, the reason of their choice is an interesting topic that will be further discussed in Chapter Five.

### **3.3.5 Interview Procedure**

I have explained the rationale of the interview design. In this section, I will explain the process of conducting the actual interviews in detail. Prior to my fieldwork, a pilot study was carried out in the Hsinchu Municipal Glass Museum. Two interviews were conducted to test the design of questions. From this pilot study, I found some questions are difficult to answer because they are too direct and needed to be rephrased. “What is your view of the Japanese colonial period?” was rephrased as “What is your view of the museum building, which was built during the Japanese colonial period?” As mentioned before, from considering the museum building, visitors very often move to reflect upon the experience of the colonial past. The most important finding during the pilot study is: it is better to ask questions in connection with more concrete examples such as the museum exhibition or building than to put abstract questions. If the questions are asked tactically, they can sometimes inspire interviewees to reflect upon their introspective experience. Chatting with interviewees about current news or events also helps to open the conversation. As a result of this finding, slight changes in the way and technique of asking questions have been made.

After the pilot study, the fieldwork was carried out as follows. I spent every afternoon in the museum during the one-week of fieldwork, assisting visitors and chatting with them. Through participant observation, I successfully established a good relationship with both the museum staff and volunteers. Working as a museum guard also helped me to get in touch with visitors in a natural environment. Through guiding and

chatting with visitors, I targeted frequent visitors and asked their permission to interview them. I employed the technique of the semi-structured qualitative interview and conducted most interviews in a separate room in the museum. The interview technique I developed follows certain protocols with occasional probing questions used to encourage interviewees to express their ideas or opinions freely (May 1993). The reason that the interview was conducted in the museum was because location plays an important role in this research; it helps the interviewee to recall his or her memories in the historical building and reflect on his or her opinions by looking at objects. The whole interview was recorded by digital recorder with the agreement of the interviewees. There are some advantages to use a digital recorder. First, with enough battery power, the digital recorder can record for at least two hours continuously. It therefore avoids the traditional flaw of breaking into a conversation to change the tape. Secondly, the digital recorder records the time, date and the duration of the interview automatically. Finally and most importantly, the interview data can be better preserved than a tape since they can be transferred into a computer and burned onto a disc. Discs have a larger capacity and last much longer than tapes.

During the fieldwork, only one to two interviews were conducted on each day, so that I was able to listen to the interview and review the information. If necessary, some modifications and adjustments would be made during the process. It is important to notice that due to the different nature of the five case studies, some changes of wording were necessary. For instance, in most cases, the interviewees would be asked which exhibit they liked most, however it seemed to be inappropriate in the case of the Taipei 228 Memorial Museum, in which many exhibits were the objects and photographs of the victims. So this question was revised as, "Which exhibit touches you most in the museum?" In the original design, I also planned to choose an object in each museum, and asked visitor's views about it. The purpose of this question was set to compare different visitors' responses to the same object chosen by the researcher. However, during the process of fieldwork, I found that most of the interviewees had little interest in the object chosen by the researcher. From this, it supports the view that visitors do make their own meanings through their museum

visits, therefore this question was removed from the overall interview. In addition, due to the different nature of the museums researched, in some cases, there was more discussion on certain topics such as politics and history, while in others local issues aroused more interest among the interviewees. Therefore, some small alterations and adjustments were necessary during the fieldwork, with a shift of emphasis in different case studies. This might give rise to a question of consistency in the data collected. However, as Eisenhardt argues, a flexible method of data collection is one of the key features of a theory-building case research “because investigators are trying to understand each case individually and in as much depth as possible”(Eisenhardt 1989: 539). Though some small changes have been made during the fieldwork, it is a controlled opportunism as Eisenhardt describes it, since most interviews cover the same main issues and the whole structure and protocol of the interview remain the same throughout the research (Eisenhardt 1989).

Throughout the whole process of interviewing, the interviewees’ opinions were fully respected. It was very important to let the interviewees know that I had no presuppositions about the question and that their ideas and opinions were very valuable for my research. Regarding critical issues, it is insufficient to assume that interviewees would understand the purpose of the research and the use of data, simply by giving their permission for the interview (Mason 1996:58). So after each interview, I would explain the purpose of my research again and ask their permission to use the interview data anonymously. All of them gave their consent to the researcher to use and quote their words from the interviews. However, as is noted by many methodologists it is possible in certain circumstances to identify the interviewees. This is especially true in the case of the interviews with museum staff. So further caution in using and quoting the interview data is necessary. For example, the directors of the two cultural centres and some other museum staff have given their permission to quote and publish opinions, while a few museum staff has expressed their special concern about quoting and publishing their opinions. In those special cases, the interview data is used only to help the researcher to understand the phenomenon rather than being quoted directly. Further explanation of the process of

coding and analysing the data is presented in Chapter Five.

### **3.4 Conclusion**

In this chapter, literature on visitor studies in relation to the objectives of the research has been reviewed. Different methods including multiple case studies, participant observation and the qualitative interview are discussed and employed in order to investigate the topic. This chapter also presents the grounds of choosing qualitative research as the methodology, the design of the qualitative interview and the process of carrying out the fieldwork in detail. From the organised collection of data across five case studies and systematic analysis of the data, this thesis aims to present the current development of local museums in Taiwan as well as providing an empirical study into the introspective experience of frequent visitors in the museum.

# **Chapter 4 Case Studies: Background And Context**

## **Introduction**

This chapter presents five case studies, namely the five museums selected and observed in the fieldwork carried out in March and April 2001. They are the Bai-mi Clog Museum, the Peitou Hot Springs Museum, the I-Lan Museum of Local Political History, the Hsinchu Municipal Glass Museum and the Taipei 228 Memorial Museum. All five museums have been recently opened, between 1997 to 1999. Apart from the Bai-mi Clog Museum, which is a community museum, the other four museums are all local authority museums housed in renovated historical buildings. This chapter aims to draw a picture of the recent development of local museums in Taiwan by discussing the founding process and management of the museums, exploring the role volunteers play in the museums, the interaction between visitors and the museums, and finally analysing the themes and displays of each museum. Since five museums are located in three different areas in Taiwan – I-Lan, Taipei and Hsinchu, - different local cultural politics are also examined and compared. By doing so, it is hoped to provide the background information to the five cases as well as to show the interrelation of all the factors that influence the formation of cultural identity in Taiwan, which will be further analysed in subsequent chapters.

The discussion of the five cases is mainly based on observation notes and documents collected during the fieldwork. Interviews with museum staff, senior volunteers and visitors also provide insights to the understanding of the nature and culture of each museum. One of the reasons for studying five different museums is to explore how visitors interact with different types of museums in various areas of Taiwan. Of these five cases, the Bai-mi Clog Museum and the Peitou Hot Spring Museums are community- engaged museums. The former provides a case of how the Bai-mi community tackled local issues by building a museum while the latter shows how the Peitou community rediscovered the past prosperity in part through the establishment of the museum. On the other hand, the I-Lan Museum of Local Political History and the Hsinchu Municipal Glass Museum were both established and are managed by

local governments to carry out local cultural agendas. The former demonstrates how the I-Lan county government endeavors to promote pride in being an I-Lan resident through the presentation of I-Lan's history, while the latter intends to regenerate the traditional glass making craft of Hsinchu. As the first holocaust museum of Taiwan, the Taipei 228 Memorial Museum presents the most traumatic event of Taiwanese twentieth century history, and illustrates the cause and ongoing process of the emergence and formation of Taiwanese identity through the understanding of the 228 Incident. Special attention has been paid to the representation of Japanese colonialism in the museums since all cases are housed in renovated historical buildings and apart from the Bai-mi Clog Museum, the other four were built during the colonial period. The influence and legacy of Japan thus constitute an integral part of the construction of Taiwanese identity.

## **4.1 Case Study 1: The Bai-mi Clog Museum**

### **4.1.1 The Bai-mi Community**

Bai-mi Community is a very small community in I-lan County- the northeast part of Taiwan. The population is only about one thousand and is decreasing steadily. Literally, Bai-mi means white rice. The community gained its name because it is abundant in limestone, which is nicknamed 'white rice'. Several mining factories have been built in this area, including one of the biggest cement factories in Taiwan -The Taiwan Cement Company. The limestone resource has not only brought cement industries but also pollution to the community. The neighbourhood has experienced some of the worst dust pollution in Taiwan due to the transportation of limestone and the mining industries. Furthermore, like many other small communities in rural areas in Taiwan, the Bai-mi community has also suffered depopulation and economic decline in the past two decades. Once a very beautiful valley surrounded with mountains is gradually becoming the site of a hopeless small town polluted by dust, noise and with only a few aged residents. In 1992, the Taiwan Cement Company started to provide environmental compensation of four million NT dollars, which is

equivalent to eighty thousand pounds a year, to Su-ao Township, which however did not allocate the money to the Bai-mi community. Realizing that they must claim their right, people established the Bai-mi Community Association whose main goal is to improve the environment. By successfully claiming the environmental compensation from the Taiwan Cement Company, the community residents have identified opportunities and have started to think about how to make their lives better by improving their environment.

In 1995, the Bai-mi community was chosen as the seed promotional point of I-lan County under the Community Empowerment Project. Subsidized by the project, community residents are encouraged to solve problems by cultural means. While negotiating with major cement factories in the community, Bai-mi community residents started to look for other means to improve their environment. As part of this process, community residents studied local history and rediscovered the lost tradition of clog making - wooden slippers that used to be worn by Taiwanese people. As the case study report of the Bai-mi community indicates, wooden clogs play an important role in local residents' childhood memories: "For the residents of Bai-mi community in Su-ao Township, I-lan County, the most durable childhood memory is the cracking sound emanated from their wooden clogs. This cherished memory of wooden clogs becomes the inspiration for Bai-mi people to revitalize their declined community" (Chang, 2000).

To recover their childhood memories, they found old craftsmen to teach local people how to make wooden shoes and paint them. They displayed their works in Happy I-lan New Year Festival in 1996 and Community Renaissance in 1997. The exhibition attracted many visitors and thousands of clogs were sold during the fair. These successful experiences gave local residents the confidence to regenerate the old craft tradition. The next stage was that the community residents started to think about how to collect and take care of the clogs they made.

#### **4.1.2 A Home for Clogs**

In the beginning, the community residents only looked for a home for clogs and they found a spare room in the offices of the Community Association. In addition to restoring clogs, in this small room, community residents also gathered and studied together to trace the history of the production and use of clogs. From this they learned, rather surprisingly, that the origin of wooden clogs is from ancient China not from Japan, and Japanese people only started to wear wooden clogs under the influence of Chinese culture in the Tang Dynasty (618-907 AD), when Japan sent many students to China to study Chinese culture and literature. They also found from documents that Taiwanese people already wore wooden clogs in the Qing Dynasty (1644-1912 AD), decades before the Japanese colonial period. What is more, they discovered that Taiwan had developed its own style of wooden clogs during the colonial period, though it had been rejected by Japanese people and is almost extinct as a style now. (Bai Mi Community Association, 1999: 13) This finding was very important to the community residents who not only regenerated an old craft tradition but also linked themselves to their cultural tradition by this means.

It is worth noticing that for community residents, there was initially no concept of such a museum for them, a museum means something very grand, academic and distant from their daily lives. As the director of the Community Association explained:

Now our goal is that the whole community should become a museum. In the process, it was not self-evident that we wanted to set up a museum at the beginning. You could introduce the concept of a museum to this place, but no one would know what a museum was. The concept of the whole community as a museum only started about two or three years ago. It all started because we wanted to find a home, a temporary home for clogs ... Through that process, people gradually gained affection for and confidence in clogs, so we did hope to find a home for clogs. This home is called the Clog Museum and the vision is

gradually emerging (Interviewee B-a, Male/ Age: 35-50).

The concept of process and engagement is essential to the Bai-mi community. They did not set out to establish a museum; on the contrary, their starting point was the community's need and the issues it faced, and the museum was something that they did not expect in this little community. During the interviews, I found many community residents had very little idea about running a museum. They are only working for the community to improve their lives and the museum is one of the outcomes of the process of this community engagement and empowerment. To sum up, instead of protests and political action, the community made use of the museum as an alternative way of tackling the problems they faced.

#### **4.1.3 The Process of Building the Bai-mi Clog Museum**

Three years into the development of the community empowerment project, the community founded the Bai-mi Clog museum in 1997 in the derelict accommodation of the Taiwan Compost Company. The choice of a derelict house was significant. Since the museum was founded for the community's sake, that is, to tackle the particular issues that the community had, so the choice of museum site became a part of the project of community empowerment. Instead of building a new site, the community decided to house the museum in derelict accommodation. One employee explained the reason for choosing a deserted house as a museum site as follows:

The reason that we chose this place is first and foremost, we wanted to improve the environment. We rented this unwanted place; I should say a place that nobody uses because it is still someone's property. We cleaned it and made it no longer an eyesore. Before, people used to go by throwing litter in. At least, now we have a place to use and we have also got rid of a dirty place (Interviewee B-b, Female/Age: 20-35).

The deserted house was also cleaned and modified by the efforts of the community. They not only tidied up the place but furnished and decorated it by themselves. They

installed the external walls with colourful tiles (See Plate 1). As for the interior, they tried to collect all the material necessary to furnish the museum. During the refurbishment process, people with the profession of art design, painting and carpentry contributed their knowledge to the building work along with help and support from many community residents. Since the museum was built and decorated by the community residents with very limited resources and budget, it remains quite primitive and unfinished in a sense. However, its unfinished nature gives it a touch of surprise. Visitors can easily find the mark of the local residents and sense the air of the Bai-mi community in and around the museum.

The story of the Bai-mi community and its clog museum has been widely reported by television and newspapers, and attracts thousands of visitors every month. To accommodate the growing demand from visitors and provide a better service, the community decided their first task was to expand its space and facilities. Soon after my first visit in March 2000, the community found and rented a neighbouring vacant house and renovated it as the Bai-mi Clog Inn, which provides food and drinks for visitors. In addition, the community also beautified the pavement in front of the museum, and made it into an arcade with seats and coffee tables for visitors as well as a place where community residents could rest and chat. To meet the increasing demand for a workforce, students in the community are paid for painting clogs and making coffee for visitors at weekends. By employing part-time students, it not only solves the shortage in the workforce, but passes on the traditional handicraft to the younger generation at the same time.

#### **4.1.4 The Theme and Design of the Bai-mi Clog Museum**

The Bai-mi Clog Museum is very small in terms of size. The museum is housed in two neighbouring buildings. One is the old accommodation of the Taiwan Compost Company, which is the main body of the Clog Museum. At the entrance of the museum, there is a demonstration area where visitors can watch how the old craftsmen made clogs. It is like a mini factory with logs, equipment and partly finished products lying around. After the demonstration room, there is an exhibition

room, which displayed one pair of king clogs made by the community in 1997, two pairs of traditional clogs, and about twenty pairs of clogs painted by children in the community. Unlike the traditional museum, most of the exhibits are exposed to the public. One member of the museum staff expressed her idea as follows:

Our general impression of museums is that exhibits are in glass cases, and are untouchable. And all we can do is stand there and look at them. My idea is that the museum should be “touchable”. In addition to appreciation, there should be an educational purpose... Because if you cannot touch it, you are unable to have strong feelings towards it (Interviewee B-b, Female/Age: 20-35).

So in the Bai-mi Clog Museum, visitors hardly feel it is a museum because almost everything can be touched and they do not need to worry about breaking exhibits or making a noise. There are no museum rules in this museum. For children, many of them especially like the pair of king clogs, which are approximately the same height as an eight-year old child (See Plate 2). They like to play in and around them. In the third area, there is a museum shop, which displays various styles of wooden clogs that are all made and painted by community residents. Visitors can try them on and pick the colour of leather that they like, and one museum worker nails the leather on the clogs to suit the size of their feet.

The second building of the museum is called the Bai-mi Clog Inn. In this inn, there are two rooms. One is the clog painting demonstration area. Here visitors can walk around and observe how the traditional painter decorated the clogs. Another room is the restaurant, which is decorated as a peasant dining room and provides simple food and drinks for visitors. In addition, this restaurant is also a meeting place for community residents in the evening. In future, the community also plans to use this place as the reception room of the museum by showing videos of the Bai-mi community and the Clog Museum to introduce their stories to a wider population.

#### **4.1.5 Community Participation**

It is important to recognize that unlike the management of other types of museum, most of the changes and decisions about the direction of the museum are the product of discussion and negotiation among community residents, who work together on their projects. Scholars or museum professionals are only consultants; they never impose their ideas directly on the community residents. Instead, they provide training courses, and organise trips for community residents to visit other museums where they can exchange ideas with museum professionals. It is through this learning process that the community residents reflect, meditate on, and decide their own route and future.

From my observations in the fieldwork, I found the most significant feature of this museum was its people. They work together to maintain the museum in the daytime, and many of them regard it as the centre of their life, especially the older residents. Only three of them are full-time paid staff and two of them are craftsmen who make and demonstrate the making of wooden clogs. With limited resources, how does such a small museum manage to engage local residents' participation and identification with its purpose and aims? To engage more community residents' participation and interest, the community co-operative was founded in 2000. The principle is simple: only local residents can join in the co-operative as a shareholder, and one share is NT 3000 which is equivalent to sixty pounds. The maximum number of shares per person is ten to guarantee equal participation. Supervisors and managers of the Bai-mi Co-operative are elected annually among the shareholders. Since its foundation, more than sixty residents have joined the co-operative, nine of them being elected as managers and supervisors. In my fieldwork, I met several managers and supervisors from the co-operative who showed considerable responsibility towards the running of the museum shop and are willing to assist in the management of the museum. Other shareholders who do not take on voluntary work, still drop into the museum on a regular basis to show their concern about its running.

During the fieldwork, I also had very good opportunities to observe how the

community residents participate in, discuss and solve community issues. Apart from the daily routine, different groups of community residents gather in the Clog Inn to discuss community issues in the evening.<sup>16</sup> Though it is the Director of the Community Association, who calls most of the meetings, he does not force his own ideas upon the others. Everyone is free to express his/her own ideas.<sup>17</sup> Sometimes the decision is not perfect, but it is still carried out because it is the decision reached by the community residents.

Here I would like to illustrate the process of negotiation and decision-making by one example from my observations. On the first day of my fieldwork, I was invited to participate in their evening meeting concerning the alteration of the museum restaurant. To improve the layout of the Clog Inn, the community decided to change and alter the design and location of the restaurant bar. On that evening, the community Director invited Mr. Fu, the Head Manager of the Bai-mi Co-operative and Mr. Cho, who specializes in art and design, to discuss the alterations. The Director had a rather different idea about the design from the designer, Mr. Cho's. The Director wished it to function as the bar as well as the entrance and reception area of the museum, which in Mr. Cho's opinion is impossible to combine these two functions in one corner. Eventually, they reached agreement on the issue on that evening and set out a plan to carry it out.

Two weeks later when I came back for more data collection, to my surprise, the new restaurant bar had already been installed. The finished design was according to Mr. Cho's idea's, which did not include the reception function of the museum. To build up a new bar, community residents were mobilised to collect logs and install them. Through the teamwork of the community, it showed an unbelievable efficiency.

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<sup>16</sup> These different groups include community safety guards, study society, voluntary fire fighters and the club of the aged. The already existing community organizations are all engaged in the community affairs and take the Bai-mi Clog Inn as a meeting place for discussion.

<sup>17</sup> Here I want to point out the supervision or manager posts are mostly held by men. Women are working in the Community Association as paid staff but they seldom take the posts of voluntary organization. During my participation of two of their evening meetings, I am the only female among them. Apparently, there is a gender issue here. It shows that most of the time, public affair is still the business of men.

Again, compared to those polished restaurants in most modern museums, it is fairly primitive and plain. This case demonstrates that every part of the museum is a product of the community residents' cooperation, from the formation of a proposal, discussion of the issues through to the construction itself. The Director of the Community Association, who is the most important person to encourage local residents' involvement with community affairs, only works as an organiser rather than a decision-maker. Everyone's area of expertise is fully respected. It is the process of participation and teamwork that characterises the spirit of the Bai-mi community.

#### **4.1.6 The Bai-mi Community as an Eco-Museum**

The Bai-mi community has a vision now. Their vision of the future is that the whole community is a museum. From the interviewing data, I find that although the community leaders have received limited education, not to mention the community members, they have learned the concepts of the ecomuseum and expressed democratic ideas for the management of the museum. "The establishment of the museum is based on two principles: First, it is based on the principle of democracy. Second, it is based on the participation of everyone", said Director of the Bai-mi Community Association.<sup>18</sup> With limited resources, the community residents are nevertheless equipped with ideas and have shown their ambitions to create the first ecomuseum in Taiwan.

How do they form such a vision? Learning from each other's experience is especially important for small museums in I-Lan. Aiming to build a comprehensive Lan-Yan museum in I-Lan in 2004, a preparation office has been established, which has engaged scholars and museum professionals for planning and consultancy work. In addition to the preparation work, the Lan-Yan Museum Preparation Office has organised the local museums, including private and school museums into a network. They also help small museums in I-lan in publishing leaflets, holding workshops, and providing a consultancy service. Many of the interviewees have never attended college and work as blue-collar labourers, they nevertheless describe to me their

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<sup>18</sup> It is from the first interview carried out in March, 2000.

dream of the whole community as a museum.

After this successful experience, the community residents become more united and are ready to tackle other community issues. After setting a speed limit on lorry traffic, they are now proposing a new project to open a new road specifically for lorries. Since this project involves a great deal of work in negotiation with owners of factories, the community residents and the local government, it has not yet been carried out. The community residents however, are not discouraged by these impediments since they are more than confident and determined to deal with their environmental issues and improve their lives. At present, there are still noise and dust in the air, but a tiny but bright hope is emerging and growing.

## **4.2 Case Study 2: The Peitou Hot Springs Museum**

### **4.2.1 The Founding of the Peitou Hot Springs Museum**

The second case of the research is the Peitou Hot Springs Museum. As the case of I-Lan Museum of Local Political History, the foundation of the Peitou Hot Springs Museum is the result of preservation movement. That is, originally there was no plan to build the museum; instead, the museum was established in order to preserve the historical building of the first public spa in Taiwan. The Peitou Hot Springs Museum is established and currently run by Taipei government, however without the effort and collaboration of the community, it is impossible to have this museum established. The story goes back to 1995, when some students of the Peitou Elementary School, led by their teachers, Mr. Lu and Ms. Huang, undertook local studies by visiting and investigating their community. They found a very beautiful old Japanese building which was covered with weeds and used as a warehouse. After investigation, Mr. Lu and Ms. Huang discovered it was the first public spa in Taiwan that they had been looking for and had read in archive material. Though deserted with weeds around it, its grand architecture and public spa with beautiful stained glass window still reflected and bore witness to the golden age of Peitou. Ever since the discovery, the historical

building has become the site of teaching local studies for Peitou Elementary School.

In the same year in 1995, Mr. Lu and Ms. Huang also heard that the historical building would soon be demolished. Instead, two projects for the site were being proposed: one project was to build an entertainment centre for government officials; the other was to construct the station for cable car. Having heard this news, both the students and teachers were very anxious; they believed it would be the greatest loss for the Peitou community to demolish such a beautiful historical building, which witnesses the development of Peitou hot springs. They took photographs and slides of the house, and took every opportunity to present and evoke the public and media's attention. They also wrote an appeal letter signed by both teachers and students for the rescue of the house. Their endeavour finally aroused the wider attention of the community. With the assistance of a former congressman and community members, their appeal reached the Taipei City government and caused the attention of Chen, Shui-ben from DPP, who was then the first Taipei Mayor elected by residents in Taipei (Huang 1999; Lu 1998). The promotion of local culture and nativism have long been the focus of DPP's culture policy. In 1997, it was designated as the grade three historical building to emphasise its historical value and avoid its fate of demolition. During the process of petition and negotiation, the picture of a community museum is taking form. To preserve and record the history and development of hot springs in Peitou, the community decided to renovate the building and re-use it as the Peitou Hot Springs Museum. In 1998, after six months of renovation, it was open to the public. The museum became the starting point to trigger many subsequent preservation activities and stimulate the community's interest in local studies in Peitou.

#### **4.2.2 The Vision of Peitou as an Eco-Museum**

The Peitou area is located in north suburb of Taipei. Surrounded by the Yang Ming national park, it is famous for its natural resources especially its variety of hot springs. The developments in Peitou can be divided by the researcher into three periods: the first period is the discovery of hot springs and development of tourism in the Japanese

colonial period from the late nineteenth century to 1945. During this period, the culture of hot springs was cultivated and many hotels were built to provide spa facilities with entertainment such as dancing and music. The second period is its expansion when Peitou prospered not only with its hot springs but also with the by products of pornography and prostitution. Overseas tourists, especially from Japan came here for cheaper entertainment. Its image of a red light district reached its peak when Time Magazine reported it as the paradise of men in 1967. In response, the practice of prostitution was banned in 1979 (Chang 2000a). The third period is its decline in the 1980s following the ban of prostitution and the subsequent regeneration in 1990s with the establishment of the Peitou Hot Springs Museum.

The establishment of the Peitou Hot Springs Museum is not a single event but it signaled the beginning of a series of the community empowerment initiatives. To rescue the historical house, the community residents were mobilised and founded the Taipei Ba-Tou Li Ren Association<sup>19</sup>, which is devoted not only to the renovation of the historical public spa but also the preservation of all historical and natural resources in Peitou. Their goal is the regeneration of Peitou by means of culture. Through a series of educational activities and publication, it successfully promotes community residents' interest in local studies and concern with the future of their community. As more and more historical and natural resources were discovered and re-valued, there are more movements toward the preservation of the resources in Peitou area launched by the community (Hung and Yang 2000). In 1996 after the public spa was designated as the national heritage, with the consultancy with experts and many discussions with local residents, the Taipei Ba-Tou Li Ren Association proposed a project of the Peitou Hot Springs Park, which aims to re-design the surrounding area of Peitou hot springs. During this planning process, the idea of an eco-museum is introduced in which the whole of Peitou is envisioned as an eco-museum. As the director of the Association, Mr. Hung points out:

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<sup>19</sup> Ba-Tou is Peitou pronounced in Taiwanese and Li-Ren literally means nice neighborhood. The name of Peitou originally derived from the aboriginal tribe who think this is where the witches live because of its mysterious fogs all year round. Peitou in aboriginal language means witch.

The Eco-museum is a dynamic living space and a historical museum. It covers a wide range which not only collects objects but also preserves the time, space and people of this area. The eco-museum is thus the 'Time Museum', the 'Space Museum' and the 'Museum of Man's Heart'. From the perspective of time, the museum recollects the past, concerns the presence and envisions the future. From the perspective of space, the museum concerns all natural and cultural heritages in the area such as geography, landscape, plants, animals, weather, water, folklore, heritages and villages. Of course, the resident is one member of the eco-museum. Residents' identity, their growth, the relationship between man and man, man and nature to the promotion of family ethic and peace of society construct the Museum of Man's Heart (Hung 1998: 72).

In this plan, the public spa is designed as the Hot Springs Museum, which functions as the core museum of the Peitou eco-museum. As a student of Peitou Elementary School illustrates, the core museum is like the catalogue of a book that provides index of the culture and history of Peitou (Huang 1999: 10). In the plan, the museum should be responsible for collecting, documenting and presenting the culture, history and industries of Peitou.

#### **4.2.3 Museum Management and Volunteers**

The Peitou Hot Springs Museum is a two-floor building, which was originally constructed in 1913 by the Japanese colonial government in response to the rising moral issues in public open spa in which women and men took the spa together. It on the other hand intended to provide a place for entertainment for Japanese male immigrants. As the grandest public spa in Southeast Asia, the building was built in a mixture of western and Japanese styles that reflect the colonial experience of Taiwan (See Plate 3). As the only colonial empire in Asia, Japan imported western concepts, languages of architecture and techniques into its colony, and transformed the landscapes and peoples' lifestyles of the colony. The first floor of the museum was built in a Victorian English country mansion style in brick with a public spa of Roman style in the centre. The second floor is a traditional Japanese style in wood with a

large rest area covered by traditional Japanese tatami (See Plate 4).<sup>20</sup> Before the Japanese colonial government came to rule Taiwan, people in Taiwan did not take spa in hot springs, nor did people use tatami as mattress in household furniture. By excavating various hot springs and building many spa hotels, the Japanese influence successfully cultivated Taiwanese people's habit and enjoyment of taking spa in hot springs, and leading to the development of Peitou as a tourist attraction. During the process of searching and displaying the history of Peitou, the Japanese legacies emerge to become a very important part of the discovery and construction of Peitou's culture.

The Peitou Hot Springs Museum is a local authority museum, under the governance of the Bureau of Culture of the Taipei Municipal government. There are only four museum staff who are responsible for the management and organization of volunteers and activities. Without any director and limited personnel, the staff works as a team to support each other's tasks. As its foundation is the result of the community's effort, its running is closely linked with the local community. The organization of volunteers is how the community engages with the running of the museum. There are about eighty volunteers in the museum and most of them are local residents. Ever since it was opened, the museum has attracted more than 500,000 visitors per year. To meet the demands of visitors, the museum relies heavily on volunteers to work as guards and tour guides <sup>21</sup>. The work of the museum guard in this museum is different from many other museums. The most distinguished feature is there are at least two volunteers standing at the entrance to greet the visitors and ask them to take off their shoes and wear slippers prepared by the museum. When asked why they do not simply put a sign instead, the volunteers insist that the personal contact gives people a very different feeling, making them feel comfortable and welcomed. As one volunteer compares it with other museums, she proudly points out:

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<sup>20</sup> Tatami is a kind of mattress made by straws. In Japan, it is a very popular furniture in household decoration. Under Japanese influence, the tatami is also a common furniture in Taiwan.

<sup>21</sup> From The Current Management of The Peitou Hot Springs Museum in *Peitou Hot Springs Museum Journal Special Issue* (1): 98-107, published by the Taipei Municipal Bureau of Culture, 2001.

Usually people feel this museum is very personalized. Because I quite often feel that, for example when we visit the National Palace Museum, I feel those volunteers... they simply stand there or have a chair to sit on. And when we see them, we feel cold and dare not to move at all... We mentioned about the British Museum, there are also people like guards in the British Museum...But when they stand there, they give people feelings of threat. As for us, our volunteers are more, more like to get in touch with people, more personalized. So you can chat with them all the time (Interviewee P-5, Female/Age: 51-65).

In addition to work as guards and tour guides, some senior volunteers also help the museum with other tasks such as cutting newspapers, doing local studies research and the management of films. There is a bulletin for the presentation of the result of their studies. During my research, one volunteer showed me the discovery she made of the remains of buildings constructed by aboriginal people with a poster of photographs, map and illustrations made by her. She appeared to be very happy and proud to conduct a little research by herself and to present it in the museum. Since many senior volunteers are very familiar with community affairs and have a good knowledge of local culture; sometimes, the museum staff has to consult the senior volunteers about local history information. During my fieldwork, I joined them on their walk around the Peitou area for taking pictures of the natural and historical resources in this area led by a senior volunteer. From this perspective, the volunteer forms the heart of the museum, providing a platform for learning and the development of identity for the local community.

#### **4.2.4 The Theme and Design of Peitou Hot Springs Museum**

The Peitou Hot Springs Museums aims to display the community history of Peitou in three periods: the history of aboriginal people in Peitou, the development of Peitou by Han Chinese and the development of hot springs during the Japanese colonial period<sup>22</sup>. In the two-floor museum, there are eleven exhibition rooms, which have been little

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<sup>22</sup> From the Leaflet of The Peitou Hot Springs Museum, page 7, printed by the Peitou Hot Springs Museum, 1999.

changed since it was opened. The main entrance is on the first floor, which leads to the exhibitions of the local history of Peitou. The themes of exhibitions are as follows:

A 1. The Development of Peitou Hot Springs

A 2. The Peitou Aboriginal people

A.3 The Hall of Tatami

A.4 The Introductory Theater

A.5 The Industries of Peitou

A.6 The Hollywood of Taiwan

In this part of exhibition, it presents the history and developments of Peitou. It traces its history back to the period of aboriginal people who first came here and named this area as Peitou, literally meaning ‘the witch’ because they believed it is where witches lived. Following this history that is steeped in legend and folklore, it focuses on the discovery and development of hot springs by the Japanese. To trace the history of the Japanese period and its influence, the research team went to Japan to study the Japanese architecture as well as to contact the grandson of Gen Go Hira Ta, who opened the first spa in 1896. In this room, it also explains the development of Peitou as red light district and its decline. Through the hall of Tatami, visitors are able to imagine how Japanese people went here for a rest and chat after the spa. At that time, only a limited rich Taiwanese came here for spa. Most of them went to the river or cheaper hotels nearby. On the other side of the first floor, there is a display of the traditional industries of Peitou such as pottery and the growth of Peng Lai Rice. Peitou was also once the most popular place for shooting Taiwanese films. From these exhibitions, it gathers a rather rich image of the history of Peitou and shows its diverse cultures <sup>23</sup>.

On the ground floor, the main theme is the hot springs and the natural resource of Peitou, including various hot springs in Peitou and the world. There are five

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<sup>23</sup> From the Brief Introduction of Exhibition of Peitou Hot Springs Museum. *Peitou Hot Springs Museum Journal Special Issue* (1): 92-97, published by Taipei Municipal Bureau of Culture, 2001.

exhibition rooms. They are as follows:

B.1 The Public Spa

B.2 The Bath

B.3 The Hot Springs in Taiwan and Around The World

B.4 The Peitou Stone

B.5 The Hot Springs of Peitou

In addition to the main theme of hot springs, there are exhibits about the process of rescuing the house and its restoration as well as a display of Peitou Stones, which was first discovered by the Japanese geologist, and is the only stone that is given its name in Taiwan. Apart from the illustration panels about the hot springs, the most interesting exhibit is the public spa itself. The public spa is built in the Turkish Roman style, resembling many others in Europe. Surrounding it are the stained glass windows which unfortunately were stolen during the rescue, and are reproduced by the replica. With sunlight reflected into the spa, it reminds visitors its historical past<sup>24</sup>.

The whole exhibition of the Peitou Hot Springs Museum is rather static. One of the main purposes is to invite people to imagine and remember the glorious past of Peitou through photographs and the architecture itself as well as to teach visitors to cherish the natural and historical resources of Peitou. Through the whole exhibition, there is an emphasis on Japanese legacies. Photographs of Japanese pioneers and scholars are exhibited and memorialised in the exhibition. Like the other three cases, the Japanese architecture is also carefully preserved and exhibited. As a consequence, visitors are able to understand Japanese people's contribution to development of Peitou and identify the colonial past as a part of Taiwanese history. In this respect, the museum not only witnesses the development of Peitou but also preserves and constructs the collective memory.

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<sup>24</sup> From the Brief Introduction of Exhibition of Peitou Hot Springs Museum. *Peitou Hot Springs Museum Journal Special Issue* (1): 92-97, published by Taipei Municipal Bureau of Culture, 2001.

### **4.3 Case Study 3: The I-Lan Museum of Local Political History**

#### **4.3.1 The Founding of I-Lan Museum of Local Political History**

The founding of the I-Lan Museum of Local Political History represents another trend in museum development in contemporary Taiwan. It originated in the preservation movement, however, in this particular case it was the preservation of old trees rather than historical architecture that had initiated the project to found a museum. The concept went back to the early 1990s when the I-Lan County government decided to move their offices to a more spacious rural area in 1997 and left several offices and some accommodations empty in the Nan-men area of central I-Lan. In response to this, in 1992, the I-Lan government set up a committee to re-plan the area to develop its commercial potential. As an old political centre dating from the early twentieth century, it has many historical sites, such as the former mayor's residence, the I-Lan Prison and the Lan-yang Brewery. How to develop the area while preserving these historical sites became an issue that concerned both the government and local residents.

Here the historical space is broadly defined as "a space where people and history encounter each other." In practice, "it refers to all specific spaces that have cultural, artistic, scientific or memorial significance" (Chen 1999a: 21). The purpose in adopting the term historical space in I-Lan was to expand the definition of cultural heritage to emphasise the concept of active reuse them instead of static preservation (Chen 1999b: 3). Within this definition, a bridge, a street or a landscape could be preserved as a historical space. In 1994, a project was commissioned to Taiwan University to investigate the cultural resources and historical spaces in I-Lan county. The former mayor's residence with old trees in its garden is listed among many other historical sites that are considered worth preserving. This is, however in conflict with the original Nan-men urban planning, in which this site would be demolished to build a new commercial tower. The old trees in the garden was highly prized by the former

mayor, Xi-kwen You, who with other government officials proposed to move the trees and re-plant them. However, the idea of transplantation would remove the trees from their natural environment. Through negotiations and discussions with scholars, the I-Lan government finally decided to preserve both the building and trees, and reuse the site (See Plate 5). Since the building was built in 1906 by the Japanese colonial government and had continued to be used as the I-Lan mayors' residence, the committee decided to re-use it as the museum of local political history to display and document the political history of I-Lan county, including the political activities and achievements of previous mayors. After one year's renovation and preparation, the I-Lan Museum of Local Political History was opened to the public in 1997.

#### **4.3.2 The Theme and Design of The Museum**

As a small museum of local political history, the main purpose is to display the two hundred year history of local politics from 1812 when the first governor under the Qing Dynasty started to govern this area, through the period of Japanese government to the current DPP mayor. The museum displays the official history of local politics. By displaying the brief political history of I-Lan, the museum intends to preserve the historical site as well as to engage local residents in learning about and valuing their own historical culture (Qiu 1999:65). Within its relatively small space, the museum has an orientation theatre and a permanent exhibition. The themes in the permanent exhibition are listed as follows:

- a. The Birth of I-Lan County
- b. Who Governs The Place
- c. Between the Government and People
- d. The Sky and Earth
- e. Economy and the People
- f. The Past and the Present

The fundamental function of the museum is to preserve the historical building and the old trees first, so there are only a few exhibits displayed in the museum, including

some ancient documents, contracts and a traditional bathtub. Most of the exhibits are illustrative panels with photos displayed around the walls, leaving room for visitors to walk around and appreciate the traditional Japanese building. In addition, there is one temporary exhibition room, which exhibits photographs documenting the process of renovation. Due to the limited budget and staff, the museum has not changed its temporary exhibition since it was first opened in the end of 1997.

The exhibition in the museum is concise and its message is clear: to display the development of I-Lan county through a brief political history. The government of the Qing Dynasty and the Japanese colonial government are of course all part of the history of the development of I-Lan. The historical narrative in the illustrative panels is positive in its attitude toward most governors and mayors of I-Lan. It intends to invite visitors' identification with I-Lan county rather than with any particular regime or political party. For example, in its discussion of the governor appointed by the Qing dynasty, it states:

Only in I-Lan of Taiwan, there were no big landlords here. Governor Yang, Ting-li worked hard to reduce the big landlords and limited their expansion. As a result, many of them turned to invest the irrigation system and developed it to be the most advanced one in Taiwan. As consequence, there was a surplus of rice of I-Lan for exportation (Chen 1999b: 17).

Though the Chinese identity has been frequently challenged in the past decade under the recent development of the nation- state project, that is a movement towards the construction of Taiwan as a nation-state independent of China, the historical fact that most Taiwanese emigrated from China and its legacy are recognized here. If we compare this with its description of the Japanese period, however, there is a more positive evaluation of Japanese achievement, with nevertheless some reservations about its colonialism. It is described as follows:

The construction of I-Lan under Japanese rule consists two aspects: colonialism

and modernisation. In its earlier phase, Japanese were devoted to reform the civil administration and instituted the western systems such as the prison, court, modern schools, libraries and banks... To be fair, Japanese did put much effort on governing I-Lan and established many infrastructures. Compared its performance with those counties in western Taiwan, I-Lan was even better. It was the golden age of I-Lan. But after all, Taiwan was only a colony of Japan. There were discriminations in every aspect (Chen 1999b: 19-20).

The positive evaluation of the Japanese colonialism is not rare in many historical accounts. Indeed, the Japanese legacy has played a central part in distinguishing Taiwanese experience from Chinese in the process of searching for a Taiwanese identity. It is not only evident in academic discourse, but also popular within people's experience and accounts.

From the exhibition design, it is evident that the museum aims to enhance local residents' sense of place, love toward the I-Lan county and furthermore increase their pride. Apart from the illustrative messages, the site itself also conveys another layer of meaning. As one of the designers expressed it, the architecture itself is the major exhibition<sup>25</sup>. The intention of the whole exhibition design is to let the architecture speak for itself. Additionally, they have also preserved the beautiful Japanese style garden, thus creating an unusual tranquil space in the busy life of I-Lan city. Visiting the museum is a physical and at the same time a psychological contact with the past. As another designer Chen, Jin-chuan points out, the museum is designed to provide both an educational and a recreational experience during a visit because in this small museum, people not only learn about the history of I-Lan, they are also invited to stroll, relax and contemplate the beautiful Japanese architecture and garden at the same time<sup>26</sup>.

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<sup>25</sup> It is from the interview with the designer of exhibition content, Zhou, Chia-an carried on March 22, 2001.

<sup>26</sup> It is from the interview data with Chen, Jin-chun carried on March 22, 2001.

### **4.3.3 Cultural Policy And Local Identity**

As in the case of the Bai-mi Clog Museum, the I-Lan Museum of Local Political History though relatively small in scale, it is also a member of the I-Lan Museum Family and is eligible for resources from the supporting system. The I-Lan Preparation Office welcomes all museums and private cultural sectors in I-Lan to join the family; however there is one fundamental principle of membership, which is that the museum or organization should be a non-profit making institution which is open to the public for educational purposes.<sup>27</sup> Under this principle, there are twenty-eight members including both the Bai-mi Clog Museum and the I-Lan Museum of Local Political History in the family, which is growing and becomes more inclusive, involving many private sector bodies from various fields, such as the Wu-wei bird reserve and the aboriginal workshop. For many small museums in I-Lan county, the I-Lan Museum family provides an umbrella organization, bringing them together and providing resources to help them in realising and identifying their role in promoting local culture. Therefore, there are strong links between members, who hold meetings on a regular basis to exchange and discuss issues.

Before further discussion of the I-Lan Museum of Local Political History, it is important to understand the cultural policy of the I-Lan county government. The I-Lan county government has the most ambitious cultural policy in Taiwan- to maintain the last area of Taiwan free from industrial pollution. As a poor county in northeast Taiwan, I-Lan has rejected the major plastic industry, the Taiwan Plastic Corporation, which wanted to build a plant in I-Lan in 1987, and has continued to rebuff any polluting industries who wished to set up in this county. Instead, it boosts tourism by developing cultural sectors such as founding museums, preserving natural resources and holding international cultural fairs. The beautiful natural preservation of Dong-shen River Park and international cultural events such as the I-Lan International Childrens' Folklore and Folkgame Festival have proved to be huge successes, which

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<sup>27</sup> This information is from an informal interview on March 23, 2001 with the director of I-Lan Preparation Office, who explained me the principle by one controversial example of a private bird farm. The owner wants to join the organization to share the resources, however the director requires that all the birds in the farm should be treated well without violation against animal rights to permit his membership.

have not only attracted millions of visitors per year but have also helped to establish I-Lan as a county renowned for its culture and good environment for living. Under the administration and leadership of five consecutive mayors from the DPP, the development of tourism by preserving natural resources as well as expanding cultural industries has remained the most important policies of the current government.

In addition to the promotion of tourism, the emergence of local museums has the mission of education and transformation of local residents' identity. As Huang indicates in his dissertation, the concept of establishing a cultural county is embedded in the idea to promote local history and literature (Huang 1998: 23). Indeed, I-Lan was also the first county to encourage students to speak their own dialects in classrooms and invited scholars to edit teaching materials on local history and geography in the early 1990s. At that time, developing and writing local history not only challenged the national curriculum, which had long aimed to teach merely Chinese history and literature, but it was also regarded as a direct gesture towards promoting Taiwanese consciousness and identity. (Huang 1998)

In the delicate political situation and unresolved international status of Taiwan, writing local history constitutes a part of the grand project of the construction of Taiwanese consciousness and at the same time, the formation of Taiwan as a nation state. It is believed that love of the local culture and a sense of place will help to improve people's identification with the country they live in rather than with a remote hometown in Mainland China. Research has pointed out that in the 1990s, as demonstrated by the shift in power within central government away from mainland Chinese, the support for this from society at large, the project of construction of Taiwan as a nation state is emerging (Huang 1998). I-Lan, under the leadership of mayors from DPP in the past two decades has taken the lead in incorporating cultural policy into the promotion of Taiwanese consciousness by all kinds of agencies and cultural activities, in which the museum has played an important part in the local cultural practice.

#### **4.3.4 Interaction with Visitors**

As a small museum with a very small budget from the I-Lan County government, the museum has only two staff and one cleaner, who are all local residents. The staff are responsible for the running of the museum as well acting as tour guides. There is no volunteer organization, only one or two students who come to help on weekends. During my fieldwork, I observed that with even with such a limited workforce, they manage to create a very friendly atmosphere for visitors. With pride and love of the museum, the museum staff as well as the cleaner is keen to introduce the history and culture of I-Lan to its visitors.

Since it is the first time that the residence of former mayors has been converted into a museum and opened to the public, many visitors have shown their interest in the architecture and shown curiosity about the lifestyles of former mayors. With limited green space in the I-Lan city centre, local residents seem particularly to like the garden and to enjoy the tranquil atmosphere there. Unlike the United Kingdom or other European countries, there are only a few grand historical buildings left in Taiwan which were built for the government officers or the wealthy, and the opening of the I-Lan Museum of Local Political History to the public has been significant in terms of democracy.<sup>28</sup>

As for visitors, there are only a small number on weekdays, and most of them are local residents. Because there is no admission charge, some of the local residents come to this museum quite often to walk around or just take a seat in the garden instead of visiting the museum (See Plate 6). On weekends, there are many tourists from the capital city, Taipei or southern Taiwan since it has become one of the tourist attractions in I-lan county. As I have pointed out, the museum itself is very small and for reason of conservation, only fifty visitors are allowed in the building at one time. Therefore, while waiting to go in, many of them walk around the Japanese style

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<sup>28</sup> There is a trend that more and more historical buildings used to be lived by the privilege are now open to the public in the 1990s' Taiwan. Among them, the opening of the President's Hall to the public on every Tuesday and Thursday afternoon in 2001 highlights the trend of the movement to dissolve the boundary between the privilege and the public.

garden. During my observation week, a member of visitors told me that he thought it was a calm place for contemplation. Another interviewee talked about their experience of living in Japanese houses when he was little. From the visitors' comment book, many visitors say that it is a satisfying experience and some visitors, including tourists from other parts of Taiwan, leave comments like "it is great to be residents of I-Lan county". The education of the population through the local museums has successfully built civil pride, identification with local history and the promotion of the culture of I-Lan.

#### **4.4 Case Study 4: The Hsinchu Municipal Glass Museum**

##### **4.4.1 Hsinchu – A City of Two Worlds**

In the past decade, Hsinchu, like I-Lan, is a city that has devoted energy to the preservation of its heritage and has reused historical sites as museums. Both I-Lan and Hsinchu were selected as the key counties to carry out the Community Empowerment Project launched by the Council for Cultural Affairs, Administrative Yuan. Unlike I-Lan county, which has suffered depopulation in the past decades, Hsinchu is a city located eighty kilometers south of the capital city Taipei, with a population of four hundred thousands which is steadily growing due to rapid industrial development. As Taiwan's first national industrial park was constructed in eastern Hsinchu in the 1970s, Hsinchu city has drawn many firms as well as engineers and workers from other parts of Taiwan, and played an important role in the development of the industry and economy in the past few decades. The industrial park along with its neighboring two universities has made Hsinchu a city of science and technology. However, this image of a silicon valley contrasts with its old town- a traditional, small historical town with old houses and narrow streets. Since its development in the Qing dynasty in the early nineteenth century, Hsinchu has gained a name as a city of art and literature. This reputation however fades as its fame as a high-technology city grows. Hsinchu is thus a city split into two: on the east side of it is the new industrial park surrounded by American style residences, and on the west side lies one of the most historical and ancient towns of Taiwan. New immigrants, most of them engineers and scientists,

know very little about the past of Hsinchu and concern themselves little with local affairs. They are generally unsatisfied with the limited facilities and entertainment that Hsinchu provides. On the other hand, people in the old town complain about the new immigrants' indifference to local affairs and the inflation they bring to Hsinchu. How to integrate the two worlds and create Hsinchu a city of culture and science is a challenge to the local government.

#### **4.4.2 The Cultural Policy of Hsinchu**

In his work on local cultural affairs, the mayor, Tsai Ren- jian, with his team of designers and urban planners, has played a leading role in the development. Strongly interested in history, Mayor Tsai believes that we should preserve and create history through public building projects and restoration. He thinks that the meaning of history is to preserve as well as to create public memories of the locality. From his ideas, it is not hard to see why he emphasises on the creative preservation of heritage. Reflected in the preservation of many aspects of heritage in Hsinchu, a number of sites has been transformed and emerged as new images of the city, as the case of the 'Heart of Hsinchu – the East Gate'. The creative preservation and transformation, however has invited different responses from the local residents. For example, one of the interviewees expressed a negative view of the renovation of the East Gate and thought it destroyed the authenticity of the town's heritage.

Apart from the Glass Museum, the designing team of Hsinchu also plans to renovate more historical buildings as museums. Inspired by the concept of the museum family in I-Lan, in the planning, the museums of Hsinchu will be connected through out the planning as a museum group network. This plan is led by experts in urban planning and lacks the expertise of museum professionals. It is different from the team of the museum family in I-Lan, which is led by museum professionals. Besides, many museums in I-Lan were launched and organised voluntarily by private collectors or local communities, while in Hsinchu, the city government is leading and in control of the development. What is more, if comparing the project of Hsinchu with I-Lan, the cultural politics of Hsinchu does not particularly emphasise identity and pride in

locality. Since Hsinchu is a city composed of diverse groups and many new immigrants, it is difficult to construct a single local identity based on the same language and cultural tradition. The case nevertheless presents another different example of the development of local museums in Taiwan.

#### **4.4.3 The Establishment of The Glass Museum**

In the 1990s, after the rapid and successful development of the industry and economy of Hsinchu, the local government set an agenda to develop Hsinchu as a city of science and culture. At the same time, following the trend towards nativism, the local cultural centres, which had been established in the 1970s in every city and county to cover local cultural affairs, were encouraged to investigate and develop their own local culture. In response, combining the resources from both public and private sectors, the Hsinchu Municipal Cultural Centre has revived the declining traditional industry and the craft of artistic glass manufactures of Hsinchu. The glass industry of Hsinchu, manufacturing and exporting bulbs and laboratory glass for experiments developed during the Japanese colonial period and continued to prosper in the 1960's and 1970s'. However in the 1980s, faced with increasing competition from other southeast Asian countries and the transformation of Taiwan's economy, the industry and the craft of glass making was in decline. Not until in 1991 was the glass making chosen as the key traditional craft of Hsinchu by the Council for Cultural Affairs and promoted and revived. To promote artistic glass making, the cultural centre has subsidized and supported many artists working with glass in Hsinchu. An annual glass art competition called "Golden Glass Award" was established in 1993 to encourage more artists devoted to the creation of artistic glass making (Huang et al. 1999). In 1995, the Hsinchu Municipal Cultural Centre initiated an international exhibition - the Hsinchu International Glass Festival, which is held every two years with the aim of promoting artistic glass making and publicizing Hsinchu as one of the most important centres of artistic glass making. Through these activities, the cultural centre has acquired about two hundred works from both native and international artists working with glass. How to find a permanent exhibition room for the works of art has become one of the main goals of the cultural centre.

Thus unlike other cases such as the I-Lan Museum of Local Political History and the Peitou Hot Springs Museum, the establishment of a Glass Art Museum has long been at the top of the cultural agenda of the Hsinchu Municipal Cultural Centre. Originally, it was planned to build a new glass museum to display the collection and promote the creation of glass art. However, in 1996, when Tsai Ren-jian of the DPP was elected as mayor, the preservation of and re-use of historical buildings became the priority of local cultural policy. Many projects and much research have been commissioned to investigate the cultural resources of Hsinchu and many more historical buildings have been designated as listed buildings. Among them is the former residence and guest house of the Japanese royal family, later used as a Military Police base, - one of the few Japanese buildings left in Hsinchu. Situated on the northwest side of the Hsinchu Second Park, its beautiful architecture and serene environment make it an excellent site for the glass museum (See Plate 7). In 1999, after one-year's planning and renovation, the Hsinchu Municipal Art Museum was opened to the public.

#### **4.4.4 The Theme And Design of The Glass Museum**

From the beginning, the purpose of establishing the Glass Museum was to regenerate the traditional craft; it also aimed to promote Hsinchu as a city of culture. It states in its mission statement that the museum aims to “encourage glass art creation, promote glass industry development, advance worldwide glass art exchange and cultivate civilians’ ability to examine and appreciate glass art”<sup>29</sup> (sic). Its design and display policy is closely connected to its purpose.

Built in 1936, this former guest house of the Japanese royal family was built in an European style, reflecting the absorption of western architectural ideas in Japan. During the renovation, the design team transformed the interior of the building by adopting widely glass materials for decoration and refurbishment. The exterior of the building remains largely the same. The museum occupies an area of 1900 square

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<sup>29</sup> Quoted from the introductory leaflet of the Hsinchu Municipal Glass Arts and Crafts Museum printed by the Hsinchu Municipal Cultural Centre, page 6.

metres in a two story historical building. It includes three permanent exhibition rooms, two temporary exhibition rooms and one gift shop. The ground floor houses two temporary exhibition rooms, a lecture room, a showroom of the history of the building and one glass prison cell. Special exhibitions such as “The Art of Italian Glass” and “The Laboratory Glass Experimental in Early Taiwan” and “The Japanese Master, Kuni Aki Kuro Ki” were mounted in the first temporary exhibition room in 2001. The second temporary exhibition room is designed mainly for the exhibition of Taiwanese glass artists. More than ten special exhibitions of Taiwanese glass artists have been held. The first floor houses three permanent exhibition rooms and a gift shop. The themes of exhibitions displayed in the permanent rooms are: “The Glass History Review”, “The Beauty of Glass Art” and “The Glass Technology and Civilization”. In “the Beauty of Glass Art” room, many Taiwanese art works are exhibited with some international art works (See Plate 8). The glass art of Hsinchu was first developed as a by-product of the glass industry, and the style is realistic. Many small pieces of work depict pictures of rural life such as farming and game playing. Figures like animals, plants and traditional houses are favourite subjects among many others. Most glass artists in Hsinchu have not received formal art education; they are very skilful and like to depict scenes around them.<sup>30</sup> By introducing international artworks and exhibiting them in juxtaposition with native Taiwanese artworks, the museum aims to raise the level of the craft and art of Taiwanese glass artists.

The museum’s layout shows relatively little connection with the historical past, apart from two small showrooms: one is at the corner of the entrance hall, which illustrates the history and the renovating process of the building. The other is the prison cell, which has been transformed into a glass prison cell from the former prison of the Military Police Station. As pointed out, the building was first built and used as the guest house of the Japanese royal family in 1936. In 1945, it became a reception committee residence of the KMT party. In 1960, it was turned into the office of the

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<sup>30</sup> Many glass artists first worked as craft men and received training in the department of art and craft of the Hsinchu Glass Corporation, which was founded in 1960. Their works were mainly exported as souvenirs such as Christmas decorations. Not until the 1990s, under the transformation of economy, did they start to found their own studios and work as individual artists. (Huang et al. 1999)

American Army Consultant Delegation. In 1980, the American Consultancy was withdrawn from Taiwan, and the building was converted into the Military Police Station. The building thus bears a concise political history of Taiwan, which however, does not play an important role in the museum exhibitions. Since the historic building is reused as a glass museum instead of a local history museum, the past of the building plays a minor part in the display. Visitors come here mostly for the appreciation of the glass works rather than for the historical building. Compared with the other three case studies, the I-Lan Museum of Local Political History, the 228 Museum and the Peitou Hot Springs Museum, the legacy and influence of Japanese colonialism are not emphasised in the Glass Museum.

#### **4.4.5 Museum Management, Volunteers and Visitors**

As a medium sized museum, the Hsinchu Glass Museum attracts around 20,000 visitors per year. The establishment of the glass museum has achieved mainly through the efforts of the local government in collaboration with the Hsinchu Glass Association. The local government and the Hsinchu Glass Association therefore have a dominant influence on the direction and management of the museum. The museum is under the supervision of the Bureau of Cultural Affairs of the Hsinchu municipal government. At present, there is eight museum staff under the leadership of Director Lin. As the first local authority museum in Hsinchu city, the Glass Museum is comparatively well funded and is very active in curatorial management and educational programs. A demonstrative glass workshop takes place every weekend and various temporary exhibitions are held and changed on a regular basis. In addition, the museum is responsible for the Hsinchu International Glass Festival held every two years. To manage and carry out so many tasks, the museum relies on close cooperation with the glass artists of the Hsinchu Glass Association and museum volunteers.

There are about fifty volunteers who help to run the museum as tour guides, exhibition guards and sales staff. They are all local residents and they are familiar with local affairs. Many of them are retired teachers, businessmen or housewives.

Hsinchu is an industrial city, and its population consists of Minnan people, Hakka people and mainlanders. Though the majority is made up of Minnan people, mainlanders comprise a sizeable part of the population. Many of them are veterans and are very enthusiastic to do voluntary job in the museum. The diversity of the population is also reflected in the profile of the volunteers. Unlike the other four case studies, the volunteers in the Glass Museum preferred to speak mandarin Chinese rather than Taiwanese during interviews. They did not show any particular identification with the locality, either. Though the team of volunteers is quite experienced, they work as helpers and have little influence on the direction and management of the museum. Since there is an admission charge of forty Taiwanese dollars, which is equivalent to eighty pence, apart from the volunteers and glass artists, most visitors are therefore the first time. Also a large number of tourists come to visit the museum from other parts of Taiwan on weekends. The glass museum has become a tourist attraction in Hsinchu.

## **4.5 Case Study 5: The Taipei 228 Memorial Museum**

### **4.5.1 The 228 Incident**

The worst massacre of modern Taiwanese history occurred on Feb.28 1947-it is called the 228 Incident. This was two years after the Japanese colonial period came to an end, and Taiwan was reunited with China after fifty years separation. However, the reunification did not bring happiness to most people in Taiwan. The cultural gap and tension between the Taiwanese people and new immigrants from China caused many conflicts and disputes, which triggered the 228 Incident. It is therefore important to investigate briefly the historical background of the Incident.

First of all, it was their colonial experience that distinguished the Taiwanese from the new immigrants from China, the mainlanders. Under the nationalist government (KMT) from 1945 until 1990s, people were educated to remember the disasters and holocausts that Japan had brought to China, especially the Nanking Massacre. For

those who came from China after 1945, the war with Japan was a horrible and unforgivable experience. But people in Taiwan had been under the governance and education of the Japanese colonial government from 1895 to 1945. Many of them spoke fluent Japanese and some were either forced or volunteered to join the Japanese army fighting against China during World War II. In this respect, Taiwan and China were indeed rivals during World War II. Many mainlanders, including the first Governor-General, Chen-Yi, thought that Taiwanese people were Japanese, who needed to be transformed and re-educated after the unification. This is best illustrated by Chen-Yi's decision not to apply China's new constitution in Taiwan in 1947 because "(t)he mainland Chinese, he said, were advanced enough to enjoy the privileges of constitutional government, but because of long years of despotic Japanese rule, the Formosans were politically retarded and were not capable of carrying on self-government in an intelligent manner" (Kerr 1966: 239-240). In other words, the Taiwanese people were not treated as fellow countrymen as many of them expected to be when colonialism ended. Through the frustration brought about by the failure of the de-colonization, discontent grew as the dream of equal political participation failed to materialize.

Secondly, during the fifty years of the colonial period, Taiwan developed a different social and economic system from China. In order to export raw materials such as sugar and logs to Japan and later support Japan's invasion as the military base in the Second World War, Taiwan had become industrialized and infrastructures such as railways and irrigation systems were built throughout Taiwan. Though the growth of the economy and industry were mainly for the service of the colonial empire, Taiwan had nevertheless been developed and was the most advanced and developed province of China in 1945. Thus when Taiwanese people saw the ragged and ill-disciplined soldiers from China, they suffered some disillusionment in their dream of unification with mother country and with that came a contempt of mainlanders. They were not only different in language and but also had different concepts of lifestyle and customs. The majority of Taiwanese people speak Taiwanese- a dialect of southern Fu-Jian province while mainlanders from different provinces speak various dialects. Apart

from the cultural differences, the tension was heightened when the mainlanders took over most of the property and positions left by the Japanese and then in the first few years of unification, corruption and inefficiency of the nationalist government has caused serious problems of unemployment, disease and social disorder (Chang 1989: 116; Kerr 1966: 243). As Kerr reports: "Strikes and demonstrations grew in number and variety...By mid-February, 1947 food shortages were felt again, and rice riots occurred with increasing frequency throughout the island. Here was tinder for rebellion" (Kerr 1966: 234). Following economic hardship and political disorder, conflicts increased between the mainlanders and the Taiwanese people and the confrontations between them reached a climax when the February Twenty-Eight Incident happened in 1947.

The immediate cause of the February 28 Incident is that in 1947, monopoly officials attempted to arrest a woman who sold untaxed cigarettes and beat the woman unconscious. The brutal behaviour of the government officials angered people, and fury at the new immigrants exploded among the Taiwanese. After a short period of upheaval, the government and representatives of the people started negotiations. The main goal of the negotiations was political reform. The people's representatives demanded the peaceful resolution of the Incident along with many political reforms including increased opportunities for Taiwanese participation in politics. While promising to bring about a peaceful solution, General Chen asked Chiang Kei-shek to send back-up troops from China. As soon as the troops arrived in Taiwan, they started a massive massacre of Taiwanese people including those who happened to work at the port and those people who were at the train station. In addition, they arrested the people's representatives, newspaper reporters, doctors and those lawyers who had spoken for the political reform. About twenty thousand innocent people died and most Taiwanese intellectuals and members of the elite were killed or disappeared forever.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> There is no accurate record of deaths during this massacre because many people are afraid to admit that a family member died during this incident.

This historic tragedy caused many broken families and had a great influence on the development of Taiwan. Researches have pointed to the influence that the 228 Incident had. First it deepened the gap between different ethnic groups. Secondly, it helped to initiate the consciousness of independence of Taiwan in the post-war years. Thirdly, it gave Taiwanese people a long-term indifferent, dissatisfied attitude and fear in relation to politics (Chang 1989: 124-125; Tseng 1997: 145-146). The Incident has thus played a central role in the formation of Taiwanese cultural identity and has had direct influence on the emergence of the opposition movements of the 1970s and 1980s, which were very often mobilized as a counter movement against the authoritarian regime of mainlanders. Under the authoritarian regime, the tragedy had nevertheless become a political taboo that it was forbidden to talk about or recall until mid-1980s.

#### **4.5.2 The Founding of 228 Memorial Museum**

Viewed historically, the 228 Incident is more than just an incident. From the perspective of the KMT government, the 228 Incident was a rebellion and uprising which needed to be crushed. However, for most Taiwanese, it was an effort and appeal to seek political reform and democratisation. Following the lifting of martial law and the process of democratisation, the 228 Incident became one of the most fervently discussed issues in Taiwanese society in the 1990s. Society demanded to know the truth about the Incident and demanded of the government the publication of all the first hand historical documents. In 1987, the Committee for the Promotion of the 228 Peace Day was founded, and its members protested against the way the government treated the issues by delivering speeches and holding demonstrations and ceremonies. The opposition party, DPP, also played an important role by including the revealing of the truth of the 228 Incident in its party manifesto and forcing the government to reveal the truth by frequent questioning by its congressmen in the legislative Yuan (Tseng 1997:150). Faced with the rising discontent in society, the KMT government finally organised a representative 228 Investigation Committee to investigate the incident with a brief to reveal the historical truth and the errors and responsibility of government, to trace and make public where the victims were buried,

and finally to build monuments in remembrance of the victims (Tseng 1997:157). The law of compensation was also passed in 1995 to reimburse those families who lost members in the Incident. But it was not until late 1995 under the leadership of first DPP (Democratic Progress Party) mayor of Taipei, Chen Shui-bien that the proposal to build a museum commemorating the incident took form. At that time, there were five monuments in Taiwan to commemorate the victims but not a single museum had been founded to collect and present historical artefacts. After one year's preparation, the former Taiwan Broadcasting Station was chosen and renovated as a museum because of its historical significance. In 1997, fifty years after the Incident, the Taipei 228 Memorial Museum was opened to the public to commemorate those who died at the time and was dedicated to the "promotion of human rights, peace, and justice"<sup>32</sup>.

The museum is housed in a renovated historical building (See Plate 9). It was originally built for the Taipei Broadcasting Bureau in 1930 by the Japanese colonial government. In 1945, the KMT government expropriated the property and renamed it the Taiwan Broadcasting Station. The building is a combination of Japanese and Western styles, which was common in that era and reflected the colonial experience of Taiwan. In 1947, when the 228 Incident occurred, the station became the centre for representatives from both parties – both the people's committee and government officials came to broadcast news. It was from here that government authorities broadcast their policies and propaganda and the representatives of the people reported the development of the Incident and the results of negotiations to the general public. So it was indeed a historical site of the 228 Incident. In 1949, the Taiwan Broadcasting Station was renamed as the Broadcasting Corporation of China (BCC) at the time of the KMT's total retreat from China. In 1972, the Chinese Broadcasting Station moved into a new building and the building was returned to the Taipei city government and was used as the Office of Taipei Park Facilities till 1996 <sup>33</sup>.

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<sup>32</sup> Taipei 228 Memorial Museum Exhibition Guide: 2, unpublished.

<sup>33</sup> Taipei 228 Memorial Museum Yearbook: 1997.2.28- 1998.5.31, published by Phok-bun Lap Publisher, Taipei, 1998.

### **4.5.3 Management and Volunteers**

The museum occupies an area of 2710.75 square metres and includes permanent and temporary exhibition rooms, a bookstore and a restaurant. It is a medium sized museum, and the biggest among the five museums discussed in this research. It is estimated to have 60,000 visitors per year. As the first holocaust museum in Taiwan, the Taipei 228 Memorial Museum is also the first museum that was built and transferred to a private foundation. That is, the management is in the hands of a private foundation in order to combine resources from both public and private sectors. In the first year, the Taipei municipal government provided more than eighty percentage of the funding for the running of the museum while the private sector was responsible for the management, the recruitment of staff, and raising twenty percentage of the funding from private entrepreneurs. The idea of BOT is to reduce governmental funding annually, and through private finance to achieve financial independence for the museum. The first contracted private sector body for the management of the museum is Taiwan Peace Foundation, which established the framework and basic management structure of the museum and ran the museum from 1997 to 2000. During that period, there were sixteen museum staff. However as the new mayor of Taipei elected in 1999 is from the KMT party, the new city government has a rather different attitude toward the management of the museum. In 2000, the Taiwan Peace Foundation lost the contract and the pro-KMT Taiwan Regional Development Institute was contracted for the museum management.

The shift in management has not been smooth in many ways and the number of staff has been reduced to eleven. Though there is a twenty NT dollar admission charge, which is equivalent to forty pence, the museum depends on a large number of volunteers to maintain its running. There are about eighty volunteers who help to run the museum as tour guides, exhibition guards and sales staff. Many of them are retired teachers, businessmen or housewives. Some elderly volunteers can even speak fluent Japanese and are very friendly to Japanese visitors. Indeed, for those elderly volunteers, Japanese is the mother tongue and it is easier for them to communicate in Japanese, while the younger generation communicates in mandarin Chinese as they do

not speak Japanese. Most of the volunteers are Taiwanese, among whom there are some from families of victims. Some volunteers are mainlanders. As the new team came into management, there was no big change in the permanent exhibition but more non-political temporary special exhibitions have been introduced. Though the new team works hard to win the trust of the general public and families of victims, many exhibits in the permanent exhibition room have been taken back home by families of victims who do not trust the new running body of the museum. Even though there have been many efforts to promote a politically neutral image for the museum, it is not hard to find traces of power struggles and political interventions in relation to its management, since the 228 Incident has long been the main issue called up by the political reform movement of the late 1980s. It was also widely believed that it is not possible to build the 228 Museum without the support of a DPP mayor. So when the Taiwan Peace Foundation was forced to give up the management, this had a direct influence on the morale of volunteers, too.

#### **4.5.4 The Themes and Design of the 228 Museum**

As the first holocaust museum in Taiwan, the Taipei 228 Memorial Museum has a rather different mission from other museums. In addition to revealing and representing the historical facts of the 228 Incident, the museum is also dedicated to promoting harmony among different ethnic groups. As pointed out in its mission statement: “The purpose in founding the Taipei 228 Memorial Museum is mainly to present the 228 Incident, along with the promotion of Taiwanese history, reminiscence of the past, the love of the homeland to achieve mutual understanding, ethnic harmony and peace in society”<sup>34</sup>. In the mission statement, there is a clear message about teaching Taiwanese history and promoting Taiwanese consciousness both of which had long been neglected by the education system under the former KMT regime.

In the three floor building, the ground floor and the first floor house the permanent

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<sup>34</sup> Quoted from the Taipei 228 Memorial Museum 2000 Yearbook, published by the Taipei 228 Memorial Museum, Taipei, 2000.

exhibition rooms and the basement is designed for temporary special exhibitions. Special exhibitions such as “Walking Through the Dark Valley - Acknowledgment to Mothers in 228”, “Exhibition of the Taiwanese War: For Whom We Fight & Why” and “Human Rights in Taiwan” were mounted in 1997. Some non-political exhibitions such as “Retrospective of Taiwanese Coins” and “Traditional Taiwanese Exhibition and Puppet Performance” were introduced in 2000, when the new management team came to the museum. The present research focuses on the permanent exhibition rooms where visitors were observed and interviewed. The permanent exhibition consists of newspapers, paintings, sculptures, photographs and objects used by victims which are illustrated by panels and labels displayed in chronological order. The main sub-themes are as follows:

**A. Ground Floor Exhibition**

1. Historical Setting
2. Modernisation under Colonial Rule
3. Taiwan under Japanese Rule - Conflicting Identification
4. Welcoming a New Era
5. Before the Storm
6. The Conflagration

**B. First Floor Exhibition**

7. The February 28<sup>th</sup> Incident: A Chronological Outline
8. Slaughter and Crackdown
9. The White Terror
10. The Struggle for Justice and Movement for Peace
11. Conclusion

Apart from exhibits, there are two small theatres in which films are projected. One is the orientation theatre showing a film about the foundation and the building of the museum. Another shows witnesses’ testimonies and reminiscences of the victims’ families. In the museum, there are also some benches near the French windows for

visitors to use for reflection. There is also one room with chairs for visitors where they can leave their comments or have a chat.

Analysing the historical narrative from the illustrative panels, there are several messages conveyed by the exhibition. First it focuses on the social and political milieu before the KMT government came to govern Taiwan and later, it portrays what it was like in its Japanese colonial period compared to what it was like in the nationalist government period. It shows the great contrast in people's lives under the two different regimes. As it indicates in its panels how rapidly Taiwan had been developing during colonial period, as follows:

After fifty years as a Japanese colony, Taiwan had experienced a structural change in every aspect. The Japanese government had established a tight network among government, judicial and police agencies, as well as household administration organs, farmers' association and other financial system. It also instituted island-wide elementary education and constructed infrastructures such as large-scale irrigation system, highways and railroads, utility plants, etc.<sup>35</sup>

Thus well-established society contrasted particularly with the early years of the KMT's government. It is described in its introductory panel as followed:

Soon after the Nationalist government took over Taiwan, signs of deterioration became apparent: political corruption, economic depression, and increase of crime rate - the number of criminal cases increased twenty-eight folds within a year...The Taiwanese people experienced all sorts of hardship since the arrival of the Nationalist government: all positions of power were monopolized by the mainlanders who also exploited the island economically, living standards were lowered, society became less stable with widespread corruption, etc.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Quoted from the English Exhibition Guide of The Taipei 228 Memorial Museum, published by the Taipei 228 Memorial Museum, 1997.

<sup>36</sup> *ibid.*

It was the contrast between the two different systems and administrations that evoked people's discontent towards the new regime.

Secondly, the tragedy is explained as the result of confusion of identity. There is a panel indicating that identity issues played a central role in the Incident from the beginning. It says: "The confusion of identity has caused the tragedy which is engraved on the earth of the island". The confusion of identity for Taiwanese people in 1945, demonstrated by the museum, is that they were neither recognized as Japanese under the colonial period nor were they treated as Chinese, as they had expected, when the Nationalist government came to power. In the exhibition, there are exhibits and photographs to show how happy the Taiwanese people were to be united with their mother country and many of them came to welcome the Chinese troop at Keelung Port in 1945. However after the long separation, most people in Taiwan did not really know what the mother country was like, which was well illustrated by their using wrong patterns in the national flags they made to welcome the Chinese troops. Through this, the museum conveys a strong message to its visitors that the identity issue was one of the key factors that caused the tragedy and that it still influences and shapes contemporary Taiwanese society - an issue that needs all our effort to resolve. To be more specific, by decoding the message, it indeed invites visitors to reflect upon the question of Chinese identity.

Thirdly, it is worth noticing that the museum is more than a holocaust museum dedicated to the 228 Incident. It at the same time is also a museum of Taiwanese history. After presenting the 228 Incident, the museum covers the White Terror which followed the 228 Incident and The Struggle for Justice and Peace Movement in the 1970s and 1980s, which aim not only to present the short history of Taiwan but also mark the DPP's and other reformers' contributions towards democracy in Taiwan. Though the democratic reform movement is linked with the 228 Incident, it is still questioned by some visitors as a kind of propaganda for the DPP and therefore irrelevant to it.

#### **4.5.5 The Interpretation of History**

After briefly introducing the themes and design, I would like to discuss the interpretation of history in the museum. First of all, I would like to discuss the historical view that is presented by the museum. As one of the design team explains:

One of the main aspects of 228 Incident is the people's protest against the government oppression, then the government's suppression and the massive massacre of the innocent. Thus it is important to present the layman's views of the causes, developments and influences of the 228 Incident in the narrative of the exhibition...To portrays the viewpoints of a layman and keep away from the official narrative about political figures and events (Cao 1992: 86).

Following this view, the museum tries to present the layman's views toward the Incident by using victim's diaries and oral history. Memories of victims' families have been recorded and videotaped, supplementing the official documents and views. The 228 Museum is the first museum in Taiwan to pioneer the technique of using oral history in its exhibitions.

If we examine the illustrative panels, we will find that the museum does attempt to present the historical facts from the viewpoints and using the tone of the general public. However, if we investigate the messages more carefully, the narrative is constructed and projected to illustrate the feelings and expectations of Taiwanese people towards the end of the colonialism, and how their expectations turned into disappointment and rage when the KMT regime and Chinese troops took over most of the political positions and abused their power over the Taiwanese. In other words, the experience of the Chinese troops who fought with Japan for eight years, and the views of mainlanders, who had just emigrated to a strange country with all the difficulties of communication, are largely ignored in the permanent exhibition.<sup>37</sup> That is, in the brief Taiwanese history exhibited in the museum, the main narrator - the speaking subject is

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<sup>37</sup> There was a temporary special exhibition about the experience of mainlanders. It is titled as "From Strange Land to Hometown: The Exhibition of Mainlanders' Images & Objects" held from November 19, 1999 to January 23, 2000.

the Taiwanese, who by definition are those immigrants from southeast China who came before 1945. They had a very different experience from mainlanders who came to Taiwan after 1945 from various provinces of China. From this, it can be seen that the narrative does not represent the whole population in contemporary Taiwan.

This flaw might be observed in many other historical museums in the world, which attempt to present a holistic view from viewpoints of only some of them. However, as a museum that aims to promote peace and harmony among different ethnic groups, it will achieve its goal only with difficulty unless it reflects upon the subjectivity of its discourse. How to show more different views and the various experiences of different groups of people such as the indigenous people, mainlander and Hakka people to achieve a real conversation is imperative for the 228 Memorial Museum.

#### **4.5.6. Interaction with Visitors**

The 228 Memorial Museum is located at 228 Peaceful Park in central Taipei with an underground station nearby, and draws around one to two thousand visitors per day. Compared to other museums, there are a larger number of foreigners and tourists, including Japanese, Chinese and people from other throughout the world. At weekends, there are more school visits and tourists from southern Taiwan (See Plate 10). The Taipei 228 Memorial Museum has thus established an international name since many tourists get the information from their tourist guides. Among them, the Japanese have shown a great interest in understanding Taiwanese history, partly because they had occupied Taiwan for fifty-one years, and the incident happened soon after the end of the Japanese occupation. For local visitors who live in Taipei, most of them spend twenty to thirty minutes visiting the museum. Many of them become absorbed in the exhibition. Most people over thirty-five speak fluent Taiwanese, and some express their anger while visiting the museum. A few of them are so moved that they almost burst into tears. According to the museum staff, there are many members of victims' families, which entitle them to free entry to the museum, who come to the museum quietly without revealing their identity. During my fieldwork, I observed one lady who was very absorbed in the exhibits and after chatting with her, I realised that

she was a member of the family of a victim. There were also mainlanders, who are quiet and solemn during their visit. I tried to talk with some of them and only succeeded in interviewing one of them.

I do not know how those people feel who visit the museum for the first time or who visited the museum before my fieldwork, nor do I know the general response of the public. For this, I gathered information from volunteers and the museum staff and have identified that there were some conflicts between some visitors and the museum, especially during the first year after opening. One of the most common responses is surprise and disbelief. It occurs to many of the younger generation who have not read a word of the 228 Incident in their history textbooks. It only appeared in the textbook of primary school in the 1990s. As for the first generation of mainlanders, they have the strongest protests against the exhibition. Some of them claimed that it was the Taiwanese who killed the mainlanders during the Incident not vice versa, or that many mainlanders also got killed. Asking one volunteer how she deals with this situation, she told me that she was very patient telling them that it was the regime that led to the massacre not the mainlanders or the Taiwanese people. To achieve the educational purpose, she lets visitors understand the historical facts by visiting the museum first by themselves and then gives explanations if they have any questions. By doing so, she reported some of them come to thank her after their visit and tell her that it is the first time that they realise how this incident happened and agree with her that it was the regime's fault. Another indicator of the anger of some Taiwanese people visiting the museum is that they dig out the eyes in Chiang, Kei-shek's photograph. The museum has had to replace the photograph many times. Last but not least is the protest from the victims' families. As one of the museum staff explained, many of the victims' families think that the museum belongs to them, so very often they will have many questions about how the exhibition is displayed. If their family members' objects or photographs are replaced by others' or in juxtaposition with political figures such as General Chen-Yi's photograph, they would protest strongly to the museum.

The 228 Incident Museum exhibits and represents the most sensitive and tragic period

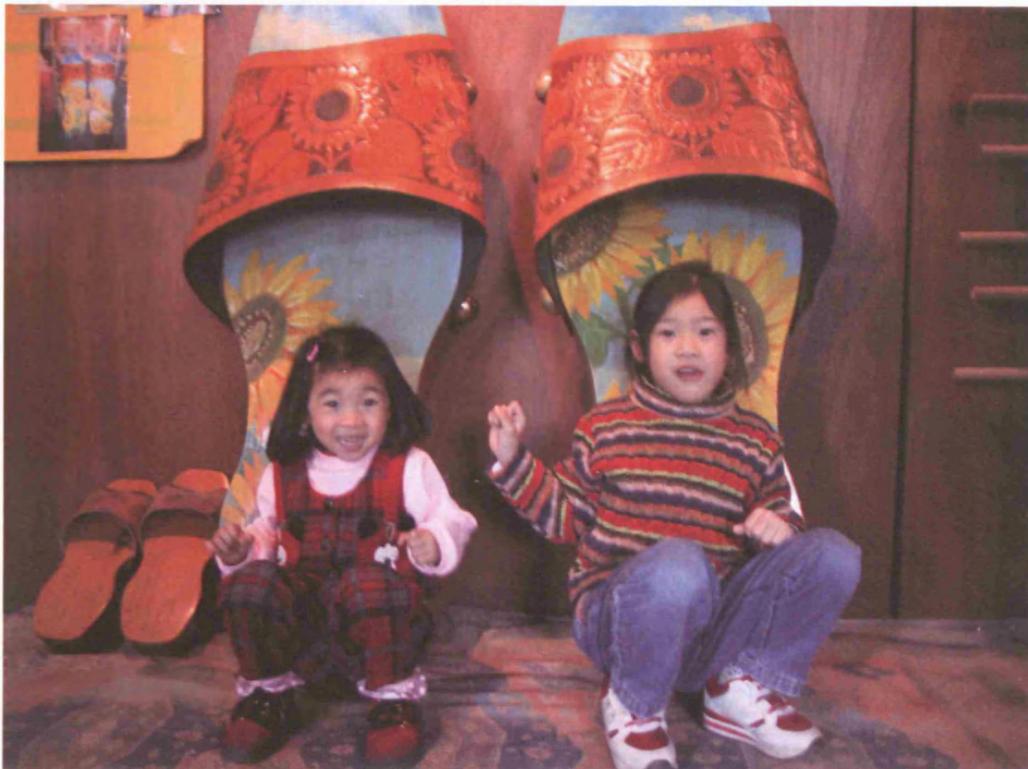
of Taiwanese history; it has become a field of conflict and confrontation. Many disputes and debates continue in the museum, which constitutes a platform for recording, inscribing and contesting Taiwanese history and identity.

## **4.6 Conclusion**

The purpose of this chapter is to describe and analyse in detail individual museum case studies, providing information about the five museums researched including the process of establishment, their layout, the content of their exhibitions, and their management style. In the context of late 1990's Taiwanese society, local cultural politics are examined to see how the growth of local museums reflects the rise of nativism. In this chapter, visitors' interactions with museums in general are also depicted. Further analysis and discussion across five cases are explored and presented in the following chapters.



**Plate 1: The External Wall of the Museum Decorated with Colourful Tiles Installed by the Community Residents**



**Plate 2: The Children Play in And around the Pair of King Clogs**



**Plate 3: The Peitou Hot Springs Museum**



**Plate 4: The Hall of Tatami of the Peitou Hot Springs Museum**



**Plate 5: The I-Lan Museum of Local Political History Is Established to Preserve the Historical Building and Old Trees**



**Plate 6: Visitors Chat in the Garden of the I-Lan Museum of Local Political History**



**Plate 7: The Hsinchu Municipal Glass Museum**



**Plate 8: The Exhibition of Glass Art in the Hsinchu Municipal Glass Museum**



Plate 9: The Taipei 228 Memorial Museum



Plate 10: The School Visit to The Taipei 228 Memorial Museum

# **Chapter 5 Data Analysis: A Grounded Theory Approach**

## **Introduction**

This chapter looks at the interview data collected in five cases researched, and attempts to establish an initial model to explain how frequent visitors interact with and respond to the museum and its exhibitions. In this research, ‘grounded theory’ has been introduced and applied; a continuous play with data has been emphasised to generate theories. Through systematic analysis, categorisation and comparison within case and across cases, distinct patterns have emerged. Based on these patterns, some initial findings have been made and three modes of frequent visitors’ meaning-making processes have been discovered.

### **5.1 Grounded Theory**

Glaser and Strauss (1976: 6) developed the notion of grounded theory in the 1960s which emphasises that generating a theory from the data is the core task of social science researchers. They argue that theories should be developed in “intimate relationship with data” (Strauss 1987: 6) and several approaches are suggested including theoretical sampling, comparative analyses, empirical generalisation and verification of theories (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Strauss 1987). Through these processes, it is assumed that substantive concepts and hypotheses will emerge first, and through comparison and combination of existing theories, the researcher will be able to generate a theory to explain the social phenomena researched. They explained: “Generating a theory from data means that most hypotheses and concepts not only come from the data, but are systematically worked out in relation to the data during the course of the research” (Glaser and Strauss 1967: 6).

In general, grounded theory is a “style of doing qualitative research” which aims to develop theories through continuous interplay between data and analysis (Strauss and Corbin 1994: 273; Strauss 1987: 5). Grounded theory emphasises discovering and generating theories from qualitative data and therefore it is necessary to understand

what theory consists of. According to Strauss and Corbin, theory consists of a “plausible relationship proposed among concepts and sets of concepts” and are always “traceable to the data that gave rise to them” (Strauss and Corbin 1994: 278). Besides, they also point out that “grounded theories are very fluid” (279). Hence, the concept of theory in grounded theory does not refer to a fixed grand theory which can explain the social phenomenon permanently. On the contrary, they believe that theories should be reviewed and revised according to changes in social situations.

Though grounded theory has been widely used among social scientists, there are some problems arising from its application such as failing to do theoretical coding or constant comparison (Strauss and Corbin 1994: 277). Pidgeon also indicates that it is insufficient to develop theories from data only, thus he proposes a constructionist revision of grounded theory in which the “data should guide but certainly not limit theorizing”. That is to say, the concepts and theories generated from the data should be “interpreted in terms of wider social contexts and power relations” (Pidgeon 1996: 83). He points out that the analysis of data should not be limited to an interplay between data and analysis but should also be a dialogue between the primary data and secondary information in a wider context.

Though the grounded theory does not give a detailed account of methods for analysis, it highlights the importance of building a theory from data to provide systematic explanations of issues researched. Many researchers have suggested different approaches for generating theories from qualitative data analysis (Mason 1996; Miles and Huberman 1994). Eisenhardt, for example, suggests some useful steps to build theories from case study research as follows: getting started, selecting cases, crafting instruments and protocols, entering the field, analysing data, shaping hypotheses, unfolding literature and reaching closure (Eisenhardt 1989: 533). Similar in their approach, Miles and Huberman (1994) give step-by-step guidance in organizing data and generating theories through various matrices and tables. The reasons of using matrices and tables are that such a method:

(a) displays all of the relevant responses of all key informants on one sheet, (b) allows an initial comparison between informants, (c) lets you see how the data can be analysed further (d) for multiple case studies, lends itself easily to cross-case analysis and will not have to be redone, and (e) for multiple case studies, provides some preliminary standardization - a set of content-analytic themes that all case analysts will be using” (Miles and Huberman 1994:128).

Based on the principle of the grounded theory, some methods have been applied in this research such as within-case analysis and cross-case patterns search; tables and matrices are drawn to compare data by a systematic method. Following these techniques, some initial hypotheses were generated and a model was proposed attempting to explain the researched question.

## **5.2 Transcribing, Categorising and Analysing Data**

In this section, the process of transcription and the method of data analysis will be discussed. As suggested by many researchers, the process of data collection is itself an activity of initial data analysis (Eisenhardt 1989). Some, for example Baker (Baker 1997), believes that the process of interviewing is a process of data generation rather than data collection. It is also suggested that it is better to start to analyse the data in the field. The first one or two interviews of each case study were listened to and some initial analysis done during the fieldwork. In the months following the fieldwork, a further analysis was carried out using a grid. The grid completed with data from the interviews was designed to display the similarities and differences in the data. From the grid, I was able to identify some themes and a number of relevant points. Following the recording of data, each interview was translated into English. The recording was listened to again while the text was proof read. The principle used as a basis for translation was to try to catch the original ideas and expressions of interviewees.

After completion of each translation, it is imported, categorised and analysed with the

help of the computer software NUDIST. Mason has indicated that “ (t)he central idea of indexing is that the researcher applies a uniform set of indexing categories systematically and consistently to their data” (Mason 1996: 111). Following the protocol of interview design, some main indexing categories were created and through the process of analysis, further subcategories were generated. With the assistance of computer software Q.S.R NUDIST (Version 4.0), texts from different interviews were coded and imported into various subcategories. In other words, each subcategory can store retrievable texts from different interview sources. Through systematically categorising and comparing the data, themes and patterns emerge. Various theories relating to the themes are drawn on in order to examine and investigate the topic researched.

How to incorporate the data with index into the writing of thesis? Two main strategies are often suggested by methodologists in case study research: within-case displays and cross-case analysis (Eisenhardt 1989; Miles and Huberman 1994). In within-case displays, the researcher is usually engaged in detailed descriptions of each case. Eisenhardt believes that these are central to the generation of insights. He believes that the process of writing up for each case “allows the unique patterns of each case to emerge before investigators push to generalise patterns across case” (Eisenhardt 1989: 540). Close analysis of the data allows the researcher to become fully familiar with each case study, identifying the unique features of the management and exhibition policy of each museum. Each case has been first described in Chapter four and one case will be further discussed and analysed, employing the technique of within-case display in the next section.

### **5.3 Within-Case Displays: Taipei 228 Memorial Museum**

In this research, five museums have been chosen as multiple case studies and twenty-five visitors and volunteers have been interviewed in total. Participants have been asked questions covering the same issues designed by the interview protocol. As mentioned, to facilitate the cross-case comparison, a grid for each case has been

drawn to highlight some significant features from the interview data. In this section, the researcher will use the case of the 228 Memorial Museum as an example to identify themes emerging in one single case analysis. Notes from interview data have been taken and shown in the grid as follows:

	T-1	T-2	T-3	T-4	T-5
What prompted you to visit the museum again?	Because of the good weather	Just walk around			
(Why did you choose to be a volunteer here?)			The good environment	History Teacher's responsibility	Interested in Taiwan History
What benefit do you get from being a volunteer?			Learning	Contribution to society	Learning
What impresses you most?			Seeing visitors crying/ Witness	Digging eyes of political leaders	More older visitors
Which exhibits do you like most? Why?	The Statue of Mr. Wang Justice done	Execution Scene Touched/feel painful	The special exhibition	The model of Taiwan	Photo of the death (Elites) Courage
Has anything disappointed you? Why?	Nothing particular.	The social movement of DDP	228 only, not white terror	Broken broadcasting equipment	
If you could choose, would you like to add something here?		Music			First hand official document
In your opinion, what messages does the museum convey to you?			Understand history to avoid tragedy	Political coercion, not ethnic issue	The fact of 228: Corruption of government
Whose museum do you think it is?		People of Taiwan	People of Taiwan	People of Taiwan	The whole population

Have you been to this building before its renovation? (Memories in past)	Fun day out in the park	No	Listen to radio broadcasted from here	First encounter with mainlanders	No, only the park
What is your view of restoration of historical building as a museum?	Nice. Let younger generations understand the history	Acceptable	Better than preservation. It's useless to preserve & not open to the public	Great. It's a historical site.	Agree very much.
What does the heritage mean to you?		A nation, a society & a person needs history & identity	Tired of modern buildings. Feature of heritage	The footsteps of the predecessor	History/ Heritage is document
What is your view of Japanese colonialism?		Empathy of Japan is because of the 228.	Love & hate. Who likes to be governed by others? Good architecture.		Import western ideas. Good architecture.
What's your view of KMT & current government's agenda?	Terrified trauma. Stop schooling	Inferior if compare with Japan	Disaster of earthquake. Corruption	KMT wants to diminish 228	Politically, Japan is better than the KMT
What other museums/ heritage have you visited?			The Holland building & President's residence	Holocaust museum in Pearl Harbour	
Which museum do you think most		The Palace Museum is	The Palace Museum is		Historical Origin Ex. Hall

represents Taiwanese culture?		Chinese, not Taiwanese.	nice/I like Chinese paintings		of Taiwanese History & Culture Park
In your opinion, is there an individual Taiwanese culture? If yes, what's that?		Immigration/ Colonial experience	Lack of confidence.	More primitive but now is polluted by Chinese culture.	Different systems. More social brotherhood/ Sense of insecurity
In the questionnaire, you identify yourself as--- (Taiwanese), Why?	Taiwanese/ I was born here & grew up here	Taiwanese/ It's clear. ROC was founded in 1912	Taiwanese	Taiwanese	Taiwanese Mainlander/ to tell my origin & the present
What's your view toward other ethnic groups such as aboriginal people?		Want to understand mainlanders/ Important to have multi-cultures		Many mainlanders can't take and face the 228.	Mainlanders should be present. It's the fault of the regime. Mutual understanding

**Table 4: Notes from Interview Data in the Taipei 228 Memorial Museum**

A mixture of quotes and summary phrases are used in this grid to pool participants' responses. From the grid, the researcher is able to sum up each participant's views across different issues as well as to compare viewpoints of respondents on certain issue within one case (Miles and Huberman 1994: 31). In the following sections, the researcher will use the grid of the 228 Memorial Museum as an example to discuss interviewees' viewpoints and identify several responses and themes from the data.

### **5.3.1 Reflection and Recollection of Museum Visiting**

Due to the nature of the museum, respondents have shown strong feelings towards the exhibitions when they were asked which exhibit touched them most. Two of the respondents, including one family member of the victims, felt like crying when looking at their preferred exhibits. Another respondent showed his admiration of those elites who were executed during the incident. Unlike exhibitions in other types of museums, the exhibits of the 228 Memorial Museum have a poignant effect on visitors and invite further reflection upon history. Respondents in general showed a good knowledge of the exhibition and three of them thought that the theme of the museum was to give a history lesson to remind people not to reiterate the tragedy. They not only agreed with the exhibition's theme but also gave their criticism of the display of the museum. Two of them questioned the exhibition of social and political opposition movements and thought they were not relevant to the 228 Incident, and therefore should not have been included by the museum. This showed that respondents did not accept all the messages that a museum conveys; they also had their own opinions about the exhibition theme and its display.

Visiting the museum also caused respondents to reminisce. From the data, it is found that both the museum building and exhibition trigger visitors' memories and episodes in their lives. Due to the nature of the 228 Memorial Museum, respondents were also inclined to recall events in their lives during these traumatic years when the Incident happened. Three of them recalled episodes from their own lives, especially during the years after the 228 Incident in the 1950s and 1960s, and one respondent associated the museum building with his high school building built by the Japanese colonial government. Some memories and life episodes were recollected in connection with their visits. Thus, the nature and content of the exhibition do effect how and what visitors recall in the museum.

### **5.3.2 The Meaning of Historical House**

Since the Taipei 228 Memorial Museum is situated in a historical house, how the historical house effects visitors' experience in their visits and what their opinions are

of the use of the building as a museum are major issues in this research. From the interview data, all respondents interviewed agreed that the historical buildings should be preserved and thought it was a good idea to convert the historical building into a museum. When asked about the meaning of historical building to them, respondents gave different accounts. In general, they thought the historical house provided tangible evidence of history and it was important in helping their descendants to understand the past.

Apart from the historical points of view, two interesting accounts emerged in this case study: one is the aesthetic value of the historical house and the other is the role that historical houses play in the formation of cultural identity. For example, T-3 reflected that the meaning of a historical building was its aesthetic beauty. She said she was bored at seeing all the modern buildings and thought that a historical building could provide an alternative sight and aesthetic pleasure. T-2, on the other hand, regarded the heritage as a symbol which represented the personal as well as national identity. He explained the meaning of heritage as follows: “A country, a society and a person could not live without history and identity” (Interview T-2, Male/Age: 36-50). From these accounts, we can conclude that for frequent visitors, historical houses and heritage do not only preserve the material evidence of the past but also contribute to establish their cultural identities.

### **5.3.3 The Experience of Japanese Colonialism**

Several questions were asked in order to investigate frequent visitors' meaning-making processes in relation to their cultural identities. One of the important factors that influences visitors' formation of cultural identity is the experience of Japanese colonialism. Some respondents found the colonial experience had distinguished Taiwanese culture from Chinese culture; in the same way as one researcher points out: “the experience of Japanese colonization provided an alternative tradition for the Taiwanese” (Lo 1994: 208). In the Taipei 228 Memorial Museum, respondents tended to compare the Japanese colonial government with the KMT government. Influenced by the 228 Incident, volunteers and frequent visitors, in

general, have formed a relatively positive attitude towards the Japanese colonial government. Some of them took the view that the Taiwanese people's empathy towards Japanese people was because of the 228 Incident. One respondent drew a comparison from the exhibition and indicated:

If you take a look at the period after the war and before the 228 Incident, Taiwanese people were very happy to be united with China in 1945. The empathy towards Japanese people of many Taiwanese now is because of the 228 Incident... why they have empathy is because they compare the nationalist government... well, we should say they compare the KMT's regime after the war with the Japanese regime before the war. They forget their parents were very happy to be united with China in 1945. They forget that the Japanese were very cruel to Taiwanese...They simply think that the 228 Incident happened under the KMT's regime (Interviewee T-2, Male/Age: 36-50).

His comment reflects the messages conveyed by the museum exhibition. Unlike Koreans, who have reacted to the colonial past strongly, people in Taiwan at large have empathy with Japanese people and regard the Japanese legacy as part of their heritage. Even though the national curriculum under the KMT regime emphasised the ruthlessness of the Japanese colonial policy, many Taiwanese people, especially the older generations who had received a Japanese education, have great sympathy towards Japanese people and its culture. Apart from their experience of the 228 Incident, respondents enhanced their positive evaluations towards the Japanese through a comparison of the achievements of the Japanese colonial government and the KMT. In the grid, it shows that through comparison, two interviewees found that the Japanese colonial government was better than the KMT regime and three respondents were impressed by the solid infrastructures and enduring architecture of the Japanese government. The preservation of Japanese colonial architecture through the conversion of buildings into museums greatly impressed many visitors who have come to consider this heritage a part of Taiwanese culture.

### **5.3.4 The Concept of Taiwanese Culture**

As Lo points out the experience of multiple-domination has contributed an essential part to the formation of Taiwanese nationalism (1994: 208). From Japanese colonialism to the regime of KMT, people in Taiwan have experienced different systems of government and culture, and are able to compare the difference between them. It is believed that through the traumatic experience of the 228 Incident and comparison of different cultures that respondents have constructed their Taiwanese cultural identity. How do respondents construct their cultural identities and what do they think of Taiwanese culture? Two questions have been asked to investigate this issue. First, the respondents were asked which museum they thought most represented Taiwanese culture. The second question is whether they think there is an individual Taiwanese culture, and if so, what it comprises. From the interview data, it also shows most respondents think that Taiwan has its own culture and each gives his or her own opinion. When asked about their views towards Taiwanese culture, in general, they thought that the differences between Chinese and Taiwanese culture were due to geographic and historical separation. One interviewee gave his opinions on the difference between Taiwanese and Chinese cultures and said:

They should be different. Here it does not refer to the political position because this is a very practical question to me. Taiwanese culture is derived from immigrants four hundred years ago, and through the colonialism, it is certainly different from Chinese culture (Interviewee T-2, Male/Age: 36-50).

Apart from the historical and geographic separation, two other respondents explained the difference between Taiwanese and Chinese culture by its people and tradition. T-3 felt that people in Taiwan, in general, lack confidence because they have been deprived of the right of speaking their own language. Under the government of KMT, Taiwanese language was devalued to a dialect and speaking it was discouraged in public. T-3 recalled:

I remember there was only half an hour program spoken in Taiwanese on the

TV. If the program was in mandarin, only working class people spoke Taiwanese and managers spoke only mandarin... They reduced our confidence (Interviewee T-3, Female/ Age: 51-65).

Similarly, T-4 compared Taiwanese with Chinese people and thought that Taiwanese people were more primitive and T-5 observed that people in Taiwan feel less secure because it is an immigrant society. These accounts indicate that respondents explain their views of Taiwanese cultures from various perspectives such as language, lifestyle and national characteristics. To sum up, they believe that people in Taiwan have developed a different culture from Chinese culture.

From this case study, it is found that frequent visitors to the 228 Memorial Museum looked at exhibits carefully and identified the experience of Japanese colonialism as an essential part of Taiwanese culture. Through the refurbishment of the Japanese building as a museum, visitors can further recall memories from the past and compare the achievements of different regimes from the material evidence.

### **5.3.5 Ethnicity and Ethnic Conflict**

The 228 Incident was a major event, which has been regarded as one of the major reasons that caused the division between two ethnic groups – Taiwanese people (ben-shen ren) and mainlanders (wei-shen ren). From time to time, conflicts between the museum and visitors have been reported. On the ethnic issue, two respondents thought that mainlanders should try harder to understand the historical facts, while two other interviewees emphasised the importance of cultural diversity. Interviewee T-5, the second generation of mainlanders, gave his view of the ethnic issue:

Let both ben-shen ren and wei-shen ren know what happened before and stop it from happening again. Let all of us understand that it was not wei-shen ren killing ben-shen ren. It was the responsibility of the KMT regime. Mainlanders should not be held responsible for it. Of course, people now are talking about forgiveness. In fact, mainlanders were also victims. Most mainlanders were also

victims. Though most government officers were wei-shen ren, the wei shen ren did not represent the ruling class. It was true that ninety percent of the government officers were wei-shen ren and ben-shen ren occupied only ten to twenty percent of government positions. But most wei-shen ren were not from the ruling class, neither were most ben-shen ren (Interviewee T-5, Male/Age: 51-65).

Here T-5 reflected upon the ethnic conflict and tried to provide an explanation of the cause of the tragedy. Visiting the 228 Memorial Museum does help them to reflect upon the ethnic issue. From the interview data, it shows that respondents with different ethnic backgrounds have different views towards the ethnic conflicts caused by the 228 Incident, but they all agreed that it was important to understand the historical facts to avoid the tragedy repeating itself.

From this single case study, some initial characteristics of frequent visitors have emerged. First, they all agreed to the preservation of historical houses and the conversion of them into museums. Secondly, they also thought that the museum belonged to all Taiwanese people and to certain extent, they looked at the exhibition carefully and were able to compare the information conveyed by the museum with what they had learned from other resources. Finally, more than a place of learning, the museum building and the exhibition also brought back memories and reminiscence to respondents. Through reflection, comparison and recollection, respondents were able to discuss themes of the exhibition, identify the influence of Japanese colonialism, and express and construct their own ideas of Taiwanese culture. In the following section, a cross-case comparison will be made to further investigate and generalise the initial themes emerged from the single case study.

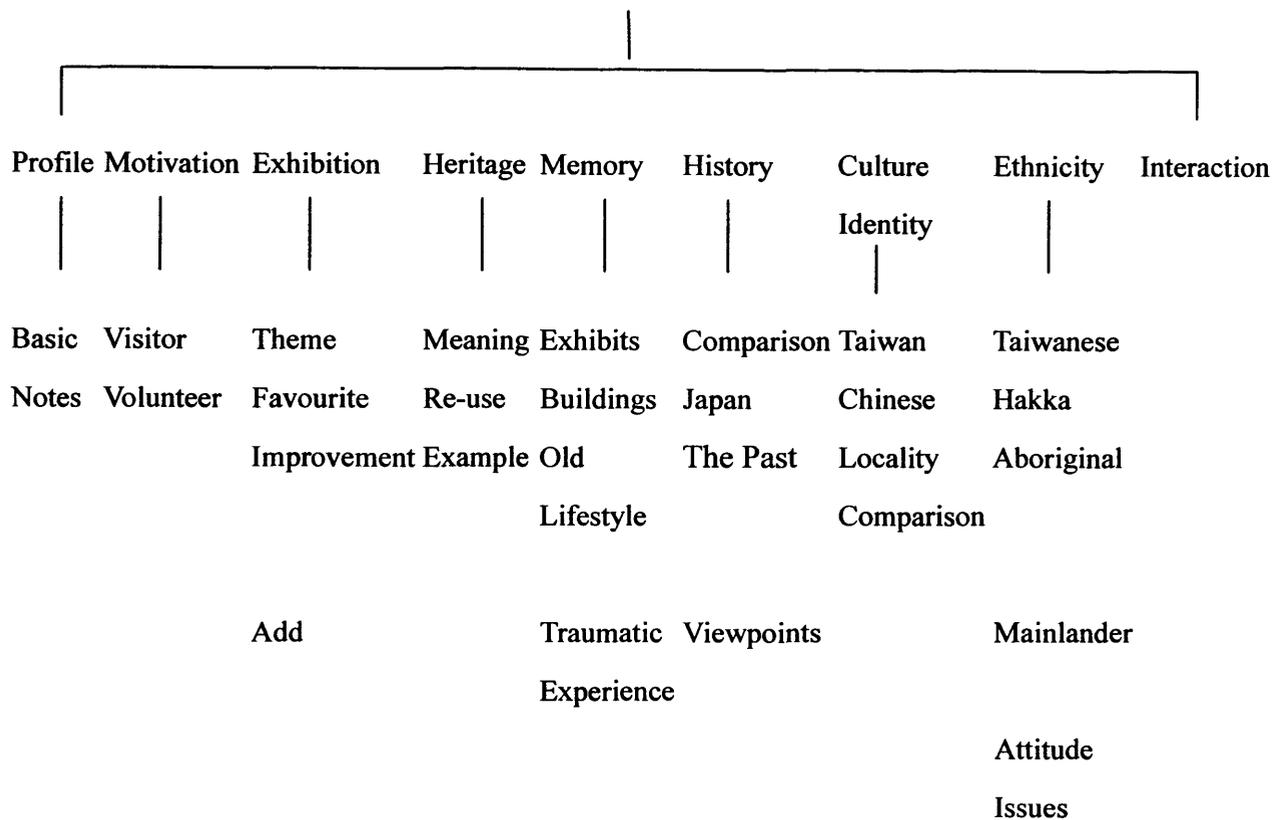
## **5.4 Cross-Case Comparison**

### **5.4.1 General Patterns From Data Analysis**

To enhance the validity, Miles and Huberman (1994), as well as many others in the

qualitative tradition, see the cross-case comparison as an important practice for the generation of theories. Taking the case study of the 228 Memorial Museum as an example, the grid displays some key points taken and some significant aspects have been identified, but it shows only one case study. In this research, it is not enough to display individual case in multiple case studies without applying cross-case analysis. To generate themes and generalise the initial finding, a cross-case comparison and discussion are needed to explain the meaning-making process of frequent visitors. Miles and Huberman provide two reasons of doing this. First, it enhances generalisability. Secondly, it deepens understanding and explanation (Miles and Huberman 1994:173). Various methods are suggested by researchers to display data systematically such as drawing matrices or models, suggested by Miles and Huberman, or searching for patterns across cases and “constantly comparing theory and data” (Eisenhardt 1989: 541). Through these processes, the researcher is able to shape hypotheses, test them and build explanations and theories.

As mentioned, the cross-comparison is assisted by the computer software NUDIST. In this section, the process of using NUDIST and the index tree generated by applying it will be shown. Following the protocol of interview design, some main indexing categories were created and through the process of analysis, further subcategories were generated. With the assistance of NUDIST, texts from different interviews were coded and clustered into different groups of themes. First, nine main indexes were created, and each index was further divided into several sub-categories as follows:



**Fig. 6: The Index System for Interview Data**

More sub-categories or nodes, a term used in the Nudist software, were created during the process of data analysis. For each category, texts coded from different transcripts can be retrieved to make a report, from which the researcher can make the comparison of views from respondents across five museums. From these reports of the main indexes, a simple cross-case table is drawn to facilitate the comparison across five case studies.

	<b>Bai-mi Clog Museum</b>	<b>Peitou Hot Springs Museum</b>	<b>I-Lan Museum of Local Political History</b>	<b>Hsinchu Municipal Glass Museum</b>	<b>Taipei 228 Memorial Museum</b>
<b>Themes</b>	Participation/ story of community	Prosperous history of Peitou/use of hot springs	The development of I-Lan.	Promoting local culture	Understand history/avoid tragedy. Facts of 228
<b>Whose museum</b>	The community	Local residents/ who remember it.	I-Lan people's museum.	The public	All Taiwanese
<b>Meaning of Heritage</b>	Know the past & look to the future	Understand history	Know the past/your root	Appreciation of building/ Imagine earlier lifestyle	History/identity/ Footsteps of predecessors
<b>Views of Japan</b>		Positive: Good security/ Pong-lai rice	Positive: Honour/good buildings	Positive: Good Architecture	Comparison: Construction & destruction
<b>Memories of Historical Buildings</b>	Normal house/ Deserted	Reconstruct memories	Childhood memories	Invite imagination	Childhood memories/ Historical site
<b>Identification</b>	1 Minnan 1 Chinese 2 NT	3 Taiwanese 1 NT& T 1 Minnan	5 Taiwanese	4 Chinese 1 Taiwanese	5 Taiwanese
<b>Taiwanese Culture</b>	Promoting Aboriginal and Developing other cultures	Different influences:	Yes/Various sources	Shared language/ Developing local culture	Immigration Colonialism/ Different systems

Table 5: Cross - Case Comparison

Table 5 summarises visitors' main ideas of each case and through the table, the researcher is able to compare participants' viewpoints on each issue across five cases. From this initial comparison across five case studies, some initial findings have been identified as follows:

1. Most frequent visitors agree with the general theme presented of the museum they visited.
2. Many of them can remember the museum exhibition and can point out their favourite exhibit clearly.
3. Most of them have a positive attitude towards the renovation of historic buildings and the establishment of the museum.
4. Most museums in the research are housed in historical buildings built in the Japanese colonial period. Through the renovation, visitors to a certain extent enhance their positive attitude and views towards the colonial history and its legacy.
5. The museum becomes a place for visitors to recollect in the special space and time marked and provided by the museum.
6. The museum provides a forum for visitors to compare what they have known with what they have learned in the museum. *Therefore, in many cases, comparison plays an important role in the construction of their cultural identity.*
7. Many visitors drew on the museum's resources to develop language and concepts with which to discuss their cultural identities.
8. For ethnic identity, visitors in different museums identify themselves differently. For example, all respondents interviewed in the I-Lan Museum of Local Political History and the Taipei 228 Memorial Museum identify themselves as Taiwanese while four of five respondents in the Hsinchu Municipal Glass Museum identify themselves as Chinese.
9. For the making of meaning, visitors respond differently to different types of museums. This is further illustrated in the following section.

These are general patterns that were discovered from the five case studies researched.

From these, further comparison and discussions will be made in the following sections.

#### 5.4.2 Visitors' Motivation and Agenda

Before any further discussion on how visitors interact with the museum and interpret the exhibition, a view of visitors' motivations and their agendas is necessary. As Falk and Dierking, among many others, have pointed out, visitors' museum experiences and learning outcomes are very much influenced by their prior knowledge and visiting agendas. Compared to the first-time museum visitors who spend more time familiarising themselves with the new environment, the frequent visitors know more about the purpose of their visit and tend to focus more on the exhibition (Falk and Dierking 2000: 55). In this research, similar results have been observed. Since the school or family groups were excluded from the present research, all the respondents interviewed were either self-directed visitors or volunteers who were highly motivated and expressed clearly their purpose of visiting. Through data analysis assisted by Nudist, the motivations of ten frequent visitors interviewed are categorised into five variables as shown in Table 6:

<b>Art Appreciation</b>	<b>Learning</b>	<b>Leisure/Relaxation</b>	<b>Pride of Locality</b>	<b>Reminiscence</b>
Clog-making	Traditional culture of clogs	Museum garden	Admiration of the spirit of community	To look at statue of her relative
Pressure-free glass appreciation of I-Lan	The history	Museum restaurant	Introduce friends to know I-Lan	
Old building	Exhibition of the 228			

**Table 6: The Motivations of Frequent Visitors**

From Table 6, the motivations of frequent visitors could be categorised into four

different types: art appreciation, learning, leisure and relaxation and the pride of locality. Two visitors came to visit the museum because they enjoyed looking at either the artwork itself or the making of art. Apart from artworks in the exhibition, the historical house itself is also a focal point of art appreciation. One interviewee expressed that he came to the I-Lan Museum of Local Political History because he liked the historical house very much. Apart from art appreciation, learning remains to be one of the main reasons that frequent visitors came to visit museums. For example, L-3 came to the museum to know more about the history of I-Lan and B-5 wanted to learn something about the traditional craft of clog making. However, learning was not the only purpose of L-3 and B-5's visits; the exhibitions in the Bai-mi Clog Museum and the I-Lan Museum of Local Political History basically have remained unchanged since they were open. As was mentioned earlier, L-3 came to the museum also because he liked the museum building, and B-5 liked to watch the clog-making.

Researchers have observed that many visitors come to the museum because of its facilities or milieu (Falk and Dierking 2000). For frequent visitors, their motivation to visiting the museum again is very often because they like the facilities and environment that the museum provides. For example, the original purpose of T-2 was to spend some quality time in the museum restaurant because of its good atmosphere. L-2 and L-3 came to the museum because of its beautiful garden, which provides a place for a relaxing break from their routine work. Apart from these three motivations: art appreciation, learning and using the museum facilities and environment, there are two others found in the research, that is the pride of being local resident and reminiscence. L-2 and L-5 expressed their pride of being residents of I-Lan County and they showed their pride by taking friends to the I-Lan Museum of Local Political History. As L-5 explained:

Why I come here often because I am a little bit proud of being a resident of I-Lan. For example, if friends or relatives come to visit me, I would invite them for a meal and after the meal, I would take them here to visit the museum (Interviewee L-5, Male/Age: 51-65).

From this interview, it showed that L-5 was very proud of being a resident of I-Lan and he took friends to visit the museum to show his pride of locality. He thought that the I-Lan Museum of Local Political History was a good place to demonstrate the achievements of the I-Lan area. B-5, in a similar vein, was touched by spirit of the Bai-mi community, and she showed her support by introducing and taking friends to the museum, too.

As for the motivations of volunteers, there are different reasons for their decision to become a volunteer in the museum. The most obvious main reason is that many of them want to make use of their time in a meaningful way after their retirement. What motivates them to be a volunteer in a museum, however, varies. From the interview data collected from fifteen volunteers, five key motivations have been discovered. They are: concern for the locality, honor and social obligation, leisure and art appreciation, learning and social experience. More accounts relating to each motivation are listed in Table 7 as follows:

<b>Leisure/Art Appreciation</b>	<b>Learning</b>	<b>Social Experience</b>	<b>Concern of locality</b>	<b>Honour/Social Obligation</b>
Art work	Learning History Document	Making friends/ contact people	Improve environment	Feedback to the Society
Japanese architecture	Styles of Architecture	Gaining confidence	Pass on the tradition	Honourable job
Good environment	Expanding knowledge	Exchange ideas	Interest in local culture	Responsibility of history teacher
Entertainment	Self-growth		Love of locality	Presence of mainlander

**Table 7: The Motivations of Volunteers**

Like the frequent visitors, many volunteers also find that learning and art appreciation are two main incentives for doing voluntary work in the museum. In the museum, they have a chance to look at artwork and study first hand historical documents. Besides, the museum building is also a piece of work for both art appreciation and the study of architecture. Art appreciation and leisure activities are grouped into an index referring to the entertainment in general that volunteers found in the museum. In addition, many found that the social experience is central for doing voluntary work, especially for the retired people. Being a volunteer provides them with a good opportunity to meet people and exchange ideas. One respondent found it helps him to gain confidence which he lacks on his job. He said: "The reason I come here is that I think I can gain a little more confidence and increase my contact with others" (Interviewee G-3, Male/Age: 20-35).

Apart from the three common motivations of volunteers- learning, leisure and art appreciation and social experience, two other characteristics were discovered. First, Taiwan has witnessed a rise of the local culture in the past decade following the liberalisation of politics. The rise of interest in local culture is also reflected in the motivations of volunteers. Two volunteers expressed that their interest in local culture and love of the locality motivated them to become volunteers in the local museum. P-4 explained why he decided to do voluntary work in several institutions including the Taipei Astronomical Museum, the Yang-ming National Park and the Peitou Hot Springs Museum:

After retirement, I expanded my voluntary work into other fields. My purpose is to learn new things after retirement. My idea is to throw away the past and start to learn new things such as astrology. I know nothing about astrology and I start to learn it from the beginning. I do this for the love of the locality, nature and the environment. The Yang-ming Mountain is something to do with nature and the museum is about the locality. I like the local artifacts and native culture (Interviewee P-4, Male/Age: 51-65).

From this interview, the motivation of P-4 was not only to learn some new knowledge but also out of the love of local culture. Others, like B-1 and B-3 thought that it was their responsibility to pass on the tradition of clog-making, so their descendants would understand the traditional craft of clog-making in the Bai-mi community. As B-3 pointed out:

Our community residents would like to develop our traditional culture. That is to say, we need everyone's contribution. If you get money, you donate money. If you get time, you devote your time. Let's improve our community. If you do not do it, who would know about our culture of clogs? You have to show people about your culture. You have to keep the traditional culture to show people. Otherwise, people will not be interested in this place (Interviewee B-3, Male/Age; 51-65).

Here he is not only concerned about the preservation of traditional craft but also the environment and economy of locality. Through the exhibition and demonstration of clog-making, the community residents not only preserve the traditional culture but also regenerate the local economy. To pass on the traditional craft is one of the main goals for both the Bai-mi Clog Museum and Hsinchu Municipal Glass Museum.

In addition to expressing their concern of locality and interest in local culture, many volunteers also thought that it was an honour to be able to contribute to the community. Selected as the unpaid manager of the co-operative of the Bai-mi Clog Museum, B-4 thought it was a very honourable job which resembled the respected job of funding and building a temple in traditional Taiwanese society. He said:

I was transferred from the ball team. I was the manager of the ball team. After one year, they selected me as manager here. After a drink in the evening, I was selected. (...) In the village, building a temple is very important and it needs local gentlemen's participation (Interviewee B-4, Male/Age: 36-50).

Correspondingly but more strongly, volunteers in the 228 Memorial Museum thought that it was their responsibility to pay back something to society as well as revealing the repressed historical truth to the general public. Two respondents in the 228 Museum expressed a strong sense of social obligation which underlines their main motivation as volunteers in the museum. Having being a history teacher but not being able to teach Taiwanese history, B-2 explained the torment she had suffered. She considered the museum is a place, a real classroom where she can teach Taiwanese history and help people to understand the traumatic past.

Another respondent expressed the same idea. He recognized that the 228 Incident has caused the conflict among ethnic groups in Taiwan; he emphasised the importance of the presence of both main groups, namely the ben-shen ren (the Taiwanese) and wei-shen ren (the mainlander), in the museum. He explained his motivation for being a volunteer in the museum:

The reason that I like to come here is because no matter whether we are ben-shen ren or wei-shen ren, we should look forward to harmony between the ethnic groups. This is a place of conflict between the ben-shen people and wei-shen ren. There is no reason for the wei-shen ren to be absent. You are one of it. We should both condemn the unjust and unfair event for our future descendants (Interviewee T-5, Male/Age: 51-65).

As a member of the second generation of mainlanders, he believed that only if both ethnic groups could face and reflect upon the historical tragedy would real ethnic harmony be achieved.

Frequent visitors, therefore, did visit the museum with different agendas and apart from learning and entertainment, some local residents came to the museum out of love for the locality, and many of them chose to do voluntary job to give a return to the society. From the previous discussion, it shows that most frequent visitors have empathy with the goal of the museum and volunteers, in particular those with more

commitment.

### **5.4.3 The Meaning of Historical House**

Regarding the issue of the meaning of historical house, comparing five case studies, similarities and differences across five case studies are found. From Table 5, there are some general findings through the initial comparison. First, most respondents agreed with the preservation of historical houses. The main benefits they attributed to preservation are:

1. Compared to the modern buildings, the historical house provides a place for aesthetic appreciation and pleasure.
2. The historical house provides tangible evidence of use of materials, styles and development of architecture.
3. It helps their descendants to understand history by stimulating their imagination in relation to earlier lifestyles.

First of all, the historical house is like a piece of artwork and many visitors come to appreciate its aesthetic beauty. P-1 showed his great interest in the architecture of the museum building of the Peitou Hot Springs Museum and compared it with modern building style. He described the meanings of historical building to him as follows:

I feel I am interested in this historical building and to put it in another way, I am fond of the architecture, sculptures and paintings within it... I am particularly fond of Japanese architecture of the Ming-Qiu period that were made in red bricks. Japanese people learned and adopted it from European styles. I like the Japanese architecture in that period but not the modern towers now because they are not so delicate without the small carvings (Interviewee P-1, Male/Age: 20-35).

From this interview, P-1 showed how much he enjoyed looking at the historical building and through it, he expanded his knowledge of architecture and gained

aesthetic pleasure that modern buildings cannot provide. Likewise, T-3 expressed a similar idea. She said:

It is ...how to put it...many historical buildings have been destroyed and all we have are the modern characterless buildings. If you preserve a historical building, it has its own character. The modern building is different from the traditional building... I am tired of the modern buildings. How nice to look at the historical building (Interviewee T-3, Female/Age: 51-65).

When asked if the meaning of historical buildings is for pure aesthetical pleasure, she further commented that it was “not because they are good for looking at but they need to be preserved because the historical house provides good material evidence for understanding the use of material and style of architecture in the past” (Interviewee T-3, Female/Age: 51-65).

Likewise, the stone house of the Bai-mi Clog museum provides visitors an example and observation of the development of local housing over the decades. One volunteer explained the reason of refurbishing the stone house as the museum. He pointed out:

It is good for us to introduce the traditional house. Earlier, the house was first made of earth. Then, it was made of stone. In these years, they were all made of concrete. It has been developed step by step over those years. We can introduce visitors to the development of houses... because we would like to introduce and pass on the tradition to preserve the culture (Interviewee B-3, Male/Age: 51-65).

Therefore, museum architecture has become important material evidence for visitors in understanding the development of architecture.

Apart from the aesthetic pleasure and material evidence of the material and styles of architecture in the past, the historical house itself constructs a site for visitors to walk around, imagine and recollect in the three dimensional space. Four respondents

thought that the historical building was a place for imagination and recollection. For example, L-3 extended from the aesthetic pleasure to imagination of earlier life style. He said: “The historical building...the main point is for appreciation and I would imagine the life of people before” (Interviewee L-3, Male/Age: 20-35). Why do people need to know about the earlier lifestyles? What does it mean to people? L-2 made a strong statement by pointing out: “The meaning of historical building to me...I think it should represent ...I feel at least...at least you know your roots or.. I think it is a feeling of roots” (Interviewee L-2, Female/Age: 20-35). From the aesthetic pleasure and knowledge of architecture to imaging of the old lifestyle, it helps respondents to build a feeling of connection and roots.

#### **5.4.4 Colonialism and Cultural Identities**

The five museums researched were not only historical but as was mentioned before, four of them were built by the Japanese colonial government. Besides, the history of Japanese colonialism plays an important part in the exhibition of two museums researched. First of all, the Japanese colonial history dominates the first section of the exhibition of the Taipei 228 Memorial Museum since the 228 Incident happened soon after the end of colonialism. Equally, the Japanese culture also constitutes a main part in the exhibition of the Peitou Hot Springs Museum since taking hot springs as a leisure activity was first introduced by Japanese people. As the within-case study of the 228 Memorial Museum shows, the colonial experience has contributed importantly to the construction of people’s identities in Taiwan. In this section, respondents’ opinions towards colonialism across five case studies will be further discussed and analysed.

First, because the four museums researched are housed in historical buildings built by the Japanese colonial government, the museum architectures, in a way, enable visitors to reflect upon the colonial past. Under the reign of the nationalist government, most Japanese temples and many other historical buildings built by the Japanese colonial government were demolished. Not until 1990s’ have more historical buildings built by the Japanese colonial government been refurbished. To reuse the Japanese historical

buildings as museums, the Japanese legacy has been officially recognized and institutionalised. How do visitors respond to this new development and what part does the colonial legacy play in their cultural identities? From the interview data, various points of view are recorded which can be summarised as the follows:

1. Most respondents were very impressed with the beauty of Japanese architecture and further confirmed the material achievement of the Japanese colonial government.
2. Through the historical buildings and exhibition of Japanese colonial history in some museums, respondents tend to compare the Japanese colonial government with the nationalist government, and think the former was better at the practice of politics.
3. Though many have formed a rather positive attitude towards the achievement of the Japanese colonial government, some recognized the relationship between the coloniser and colonised is ambivalent.

First, from the interview data, it indicated that most respondents were impressed by Japanese architecture. Some of them appreciated the beauty of the Japanese building while others recognized that Japanese buildings were more solid. L-5 expressed his admiration towards Japanese people and thought it was worth learning from:

Of course, if we disregard the ethnic or national feelings, that is to say, the way they do things is...such as the Presidential Hall, it is still very strong after decades...At that time, iron was rare because most metal was used to make weapons. It is rare to use iron to build houses. Only they could build such solid houses. The way they do things is worth our learning from (Interview L-5, Male/Age: 51-65).

From cross-case comparison, it is found that people were not only impressed by the Japanese architecture but also related it to current social issues. Since the interview was conducted in March 2001, the traumatic experience of the calamity of the 921

earthquake on September 21, 1999 was still vivid. During that disaster, thousands of people died and hundreds of buildings collapsed. Some visitors concluded that the massive casualty rate was due to the poor infrastructure of the period of nationalist government compared to the Japanese buildings, and it further enhanced their positive evaluation of the Japanese colonial government. T-3 gave her criticism on this issue:

I have heard the sands they used were washed and the construction inspection was strict. The quality of buildings was very good. Not like the buildings now, they collapsed once the earthquake stroke. Japanese people did not steal the material. It is awful and do harm to your offspring if you steal the material...Many buildings in Taiwan collapsed because of that (Interviewee T-3, Female/Age: 50-65).

In general, from the material evidence, respondents would deduce that in general, the performance of the Japanese colonial government was better than the nationalist government. Under the government of the Japanese colonial period, the practice of law was strict which was in great contrast to the chaotic situation of the first decade after the nationalist government came over to Taiwan. Although the practice of law, the establishment of educational system and the installation of modern institutions aimed to establish a disciplined colonised society in the service of the Japanese empire, many people recollected those days when Taiwanese society was disciplined and safe. P-3's recollection is one of the typical descriptions shared by many among the older generation:

It is undeniable that the Japanese government has made a great contribution. Do you know in the era of my mother, they told me there was no theft because they dared not to steal. If they stole, they would be sentenced to a very strict penalty, such as cutting off fingers. So they dared not to break the law and there was no need to shut doors (Interviewee P-3, Female/Age: 36-50).

The picture that people did not need to shut doors at night was widely shared by many

of the older generation as an indication of their memory of the old days. On the one hand, some respondents concluded that the performance of the Japanese Government was superior to that of the nationalist government, but on the other hand, they also realised the destruction that the colonial government brought to Taiwan. T-5 gave his comment as follows:

In politics, the Japanese government generally was superior to the early period of the nationalist government. I hope not only Taiwanese people understand it but that the mainlanders also realise it and reflect upon it... So you could understand why many buildings built in early years were so solid and why the older generation of Taiwanese were strict with regard to the law. These were all influenced by Japanese culture. Of course, Japanese people also had their shortcomings such as starting the war, which was a very serious flaw (Interviewee T-5, Male/Age: 51-65).

Similar to many other colonised countries, the experience of colonialism is an unresolved dilemma to people in Taiwan. Conversely, the colonised country was forced to experience the process of modernisation while they suffered the unjust colonial system imposed on them. T-3 expressed vividly the ambivalent attitude, a mixture of love and hatred, of the colonised toward the coloniser. She said:

We could not help since they had ruled us for fifty-one years. They built some infrastructure; they also did damage. They brought many of our cedarwood back to Japan. The Japanese were very sly. It is our treasure; they had their own but they did not use their own but took ours. A lot of cedarwood in Japan were from Taiwan since we were its colony, but they also did some construction. Really, we hate as well as like them (Interviewee T-3, Female/Age: 51-65).

Correspondingly, the preservation of colonial buildings and the re-use of them as museums have caused doubt. L-4 expressed his reflection upon this issue in a historical context:

There were many Japanese buildings in earlier periods in I-Lan. After Japan was defeated, in that period, Taiwanese people seemed to hate the Japanese very deeply. Many Japanese things were demolished or broken...Why do we want to preserve this building? If we want to witness our history, many examples of architectures that are left are the living evidence of history. Some people would say: "Why preserve Japanese buildings? ...We should demolish them all." Of course, this is another way of thinking. My way of thinking is that having been governed by Japan is a historical fact. It cannot be changed. From historical facts, we can understand the whole process of history (Interviewee L-4, Male/Age: 36-50).

Both T-3 and L-4 have recognised the painful experience of being colonised, but like many other respondents, they acknowledged it was a historical fact, which has been an undeniable part of Taiwanese history. Through the reflection upon the colonial experience, the colonial history has become an essential part of the collective memory that constitutes the cultural identities of people in Taiwan.

#### **5.4.5 Identities and Exhibitions**

One major difference across the five case studies is that of ethnic identity. For example, four respondents in the Taipei 228 Memorial Museum have identified themselves as Taiwanese while the other respondent has identified himself as mainlander Taiwanese- to identify himself as Taiwanese while recognizing his origin. In other words, respondents in the Taipei 228 Memorial Museum have shown a strong identification as being Taiwanese. Compared with the other case studies, only one respondent has identified himself as Taiwanese in the Hsinchu Municipal Glass Museum. Though the population of Hsinchu consists similar size of mainlanders, Hakka and Minnan people, more respondents have identified themselves as Chinese. Both the I-Lan Museum of Local Political History and the Bai-mi Clog Museum are located in I-Lan, a county known for its support for the DPP. Five mayors of the DPP have been selected in a row. In general, it is believed that a higher percentage

of I-Lan people would identify themselves as Taiwanese. However if we look at Table 5, all five respondents have identified themselves as Taiwanese in the I-Lan Museum of Local Political History while in the Bai-mi Clog Museum, respondents have shown different identities. One respondent considered himself as Minnan because he was told by his parents that their ancestors were from the Minnan area in China. Similarly, another one considered himself as Chinese because his ancestors came from China and it was his origin. More interestingly, two others considered themselves as new Taiwanese, a relatively new term invented in the past decade, since they disliked the old terms and preferred the new term with its emphasis on the integration of different ethnic groups.

From these different identifications across five case studies, it can be in part explained that different types of museums tend to attract visitors with different identifications. Or it can be further argued that different types of museums might help visitors constructing different identities. To support this argument, more discussion and analysis of how respondents interpret the exhibits is needed. Falk and Dierking have pointed out the complicated factors that influence visitors' learning and meaning-making in their museum visiting. They proposed a contextual model of learning, which includes the personal, the sociocultural, and the physical contexts. They argued: "Learning is the process/product of the interactions between these three contexts" (Falk and Dierking 2000:10). The motivations for frequent visitors have been discussed in the previous section which has shown that respondents came to the museum with different motivations. With different agendas and prior knowledge, the frequent visitors, in general, tend to agree with the theme of the museum, which in turn helps them to construct their cultural identities.

For example, respondents in the Taipei 228 Memorial Museum have read through the exhibition messages and interwoven the traumatic past of Taiwanese history, which helped them to form a strong identification as being Taiwanese. Likewise, the Peitou Hot Springs Museum and the I-Lan Museum of Local Political History present local history by documents and artefact, which to certain extent help respondents to gain a feeling

of being residents in local communities. On the other hand, the exhibition of art and craft lacks social and political messages which might help to strengthen Taiwanese identity. The exhibition of Hsinchu Municipal Glass Art Museum traces the history of glass making from ancient Chinese history. Similarly, in the Bai-Mi Clog Museum, the exhibition also traces the history of clog-making back to the Chinese Tang Dynasty. In both case studies, it is found that some respondents understand and connect the exhibition with the history of glass craft or clog making in ancient China.

From the content of each exhibition, it helps to explain the frequent visitors' different identifications in five case studies. With prior knowledge, some frequent visitors came to history museums such as the Taipei 228 Memorial Museum or the Peitou Hot Springs Museum to expand or confirm their knowledge and enhance their identifications as local residents or Taiwanese. Some others visited the Bai-mi Clog Museum or the Hsinchu Municipal Glass Museum and enjoyed the aesthetic pleasure that artwork brought them, and found the origin of clogs and glass art dated back to ancient China. Through the information they got from the museums, they were able to connect local craft with the grand tradition of Chinese history. To sum up, frequent visitors' identifications could be explained by the types of museums they choose to visit, and the content of exhibitions helps to construct or enhance their cultural identities.

#### **5.4.6 Three Modes of Meaning-Making in Museums**

During the interview, each respondent was asked to choose their own favourite exhibit and give their own reasons for their choice. From their choices of exhibits, it helps to understand how frequent visitors interpret the exhibition and make their own meanings out of their visits. From the initial data analysis of the case of the Taipei 228 Memorial Museum, it is found that frequent visitors have gathered information from the exhibition to prove or form their ideas, and some constructed their historical judgement. Compared with data from other case studies, it showed that with their own agendas and knowledge, frequent visitors experienced several different meaning-making processes and responded differently to different types of museums.

In order to explain how frequent visitors respond to different types of museums, their responses have been distinguished accordingly and a simple table drawn as follows:

<b>Frequent visitors with their own agenda &amp; knowledge</b>	*Prove their ideas/knowledge *Re-read the history *Making Comparison	History Museum
	*Enhance their pride & sense of place * Broaden their views * Recollection of the past *Connect the present life with the past	Local History Museum & Community Museum
	*Pressure-free art appreciation *Understand local craft industry	Art Museum

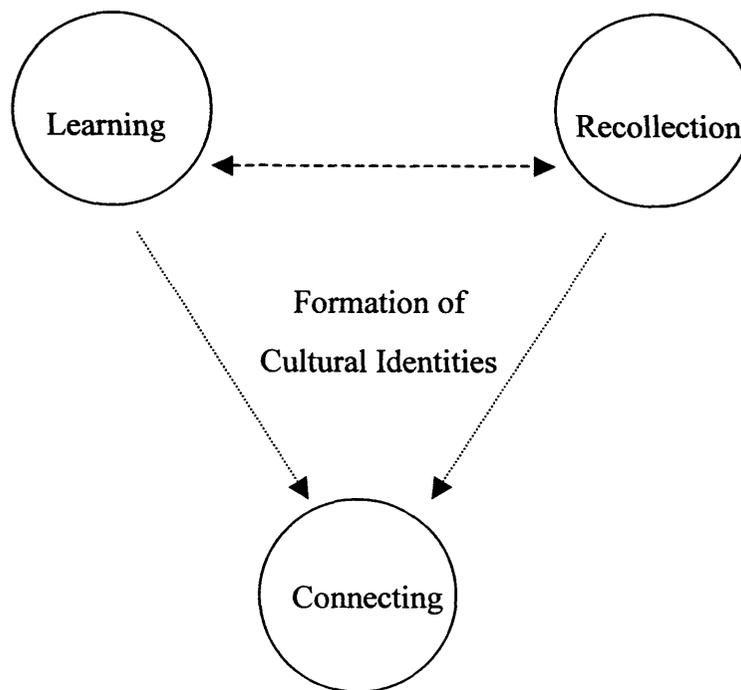
**Table 8: Activities of Visitors' Meaning-Making in Different Types of Museums**

In this table, it is indicated that visitors have experienced different meaning-making processes in different types of museums. For example, due to the nature of the museum, frequent visitors in the Taipei 228 Memorial Museum have shown a strong attitude towards the historical events and tend to compare what they have learned with what they have seen in the museum. On the other hand, visitors in the Hsinchu Municipal Glass Museum have gained more aesthetic pleasure from their visiting. Therefore, different behaviours and meaning-making patterns have been observed. From the Table 8, these responses are further categorised into the following three modes:

1. Process of Learning- getting new information, confirming or challenging prior knowledge and gaining aesthetic pleasure.
2. Process of Recollection- memories of the past.

3. Process of Connecting – recollection and connecting with place and time/locating self-identity in a broader picture.

From these three modes, visitors have undergone a process of learning, challenging or confirming their prior knowledge, recollecting and connecting themselves in a larger picture. The relationship of the three activities are illustrated as follows:



**Fig.7: Three Modes of Visitors' Interpretation in the Museum**

Through museum visiting, frequent visitors are able to gain and compare new information, recollect and derive their own meanings in order to construct cultural identities. Once again, it is necessary to review the dynamic idea of cultural identity proposed by Stuart Hall. His idea of “becoming” which emphasises the constantly transforming nature of cultural identity provides a useful conceptual model for the current research. He explains that the cultural identities are “subject to the continuous 'play' of history, culture and power” (1990: 225). The museum in a way provides a

field for visitors to learn, to recollect and construct their cultural identities. In the following chapters, more data will be analysed and theories will be drawn to discuss the three modes of meaning-making in the museum.

## **5.5 Conclusion**

In this chapter, grounded theory was introduced as the guideline for the data analysis. With the assistance of computer software NUDIST, an initial data analysis was conducted. First, nine categories were created and further sub-categories have been divided during the process of data analysis. This index tree has been constructed as the basis for the following discussions and analysis. Through the display of with-in case study and across-case comparison, more discussion and investigation of what respondents' motivations are, what their views towards the historical houses are, and how they interpret and make meaning during their museum visits have been carried out. From the initial data analysis, a model has been proposed aiming to discuss the process of formation of cultural identities of frequent visitors, and three modes of meaning-making in the museum were discovered in this research. To explore the meaning-making process in detail, each mode will be further discussed in following chapters, with more discussions drawing on data analysis and theories across five cases.

# **Chapter 6 Adult Learning And Interpretation in the Museum**

## **Introduction**

In this chapter, how visitors learn in different types of museums is examined and analysed. In order to understand how visitors learn, theories of constructivism and adult learning are reviewed in the first part of the chapter. The constructivist theory suggests that each individual constructs his or her own knowledge. The theory of andragogy studies the learning patterns of adults and indicates that they are self-directed and tend to incorporate their personal experiences in their learning. To facilitate discussion, the learning activities in this chapter focus mainly on those cognitive activities which relate to how people acquire information, evaluate it, and make meaning out of it. Affective learning, which is more often associated with recollections and memories, is separated from the present discussion and will be studied in next chapter.

Following the initial findings from the data analysis in chapter five, further discussion on how visitors learn and make meaning out of their visits is investigated in the second part of the chapter. The data analysis shows that the visitors' learning processes vary in different types of museums. Different approaches and strategies have been applied by visitors in interpreting and making meaning in different types of museums. Comparison is a common strategy that visitors apply in their interpretation. Dialogue and debate occur frequently in the history museum. Though it is widely accepted that individuals learn and make their own meaning, the museum setting nevertheless provides a platform for visitors to engage and share the information provided by the museum. In a way it constitutes a learning community for all participants and during the learning process, cultural identity is constantly transforming and shaping.

### **6.1 A Review of Learning Theories**

The educational role of the museum has gained in importance and been emphasised by the museum community. For many museums, the educational function has

become one of the most important criteria for gaining public funding. For decades, researchers and museum practitioners have been interested in finding out what visitors have learned but little is known about learning outcomes in the museum. One major problem is that it is difficult to assess and evaluate learning outcomes in the museum since they take place in an informal setting, and most visitors do not stay long enough for formal evaluations (Hein 1995). Museum learning is also called free-choice learning to emphasise that visitors can choose their own pace and set their own learning objectives (Falk and Dierking 1998). Apart from school groups, most visitors come to museums voluntarily with their own agenda and knowledge, and it is believed that individuals make very different meanings out of their visits.

Some empirical studies have been conducted to understand the educational outcomes of museum visits. Each empirical study has contributed to a piece of the knowledge of the whole picture. The aim of the present research is to identify the interpretation and meaning that adults make when they are frequent visitors to local history museums. The learning process of visitors to the art and craft museum will be discussed in comparison. Due to the limited data, the current research does not intend to offer a holistic view of frequent visitors' learning processes but offers some observations and insights into their ideas and reflections during their visits. To better understand more about how visitors make meanings in their museum visits in the present research, it is essential first to review constructivist theory and adult learning theories.

### **6.1.1 Constructivist Learning Theory**

Recently, more research has been conducted using qualitative methods, which aims more to understand what visitors learn than what the museum staff or curator intends to communicate in the museum. It is a shift from emphasis on the content of learning to the active learners themselves (Hein 1995). From these research projects, it is believed that visitors make their own meanings from their museum visits (Hooper-Greenhill and Moussouri 2000; Silverman 1995). They might acquire the information conveyed by the museum, however, having different social and cultural backgrounds, each visitor comes up with different set of ideas and reflections upon

the exhibition. Besides, they do not receive all the same information that the museum intends to convey. For example, Macdonald's research shows that there is a gap between the expectation of museum curators and visitors' learning outcomes by interviewing forty-two family groups in the special exhibition in the Science Museum in 1992. Her findings point out that visitors visit the museum with preconceptions and make out their own meanings of the exhibition, which are not always what the museum curator expects. Quite on the contrary, visitors might ignore those messages that contradict their preconceptions (Macdonald 1992). Ham's literature review of research conducted by psychologists and sociologists indicates that people do not receive all the information equally; they are in fact selective and more attentive to the information which associates them with their own experiences or with their names on it (Ham 1994: 163). Worts' research conducted in the Art Gallery of Ontario shows that visitors tend to interpret artworks by projecting themselves and their own constructs onto what they see (Worts 1995). This personal process of making-meaning from artworks in the museum is very often neglected by the museum curators who are more keen to communicate what they believe as the objective knowledge or history of art to their visitors. These research projects point out that we know very little about how and what visitors learn in the museum.

What is learning in the museum? The traditional definition of learning is "an active process of assimilating and accommodating information within a social, physical and psychological context" (Dierking 1996: 25-26). In the past, most learning theories have focused on the formal school education. Recently, constructivist concepts of learning have been widely applied in the museum community, since its emphasis on the active role of learners is particularly informative in understanding learning in the museum context. Hein, in his discussion of constructivist learning, states that "learners construct knowledge for themselves – each learner individually (and socially) constructs meaning – as he or she learns. Constructing meaning is learning: there is no other kind" (Hein 1996: 30). In constructivist theory, the meaning-making is central to learning and each constructs their individual meaning. Sutherland further points out that the fundamental concept of constructivism is that " people construct their own

real knowledge from their own experiences and that this is not necessarily the same as what they have been taught at school” (Sutherland 1997: 86). Jeffery-Clay further elaborates that constructivist learning is a process of connecting the new information with the prior knowledge and re-structuring existing knowledge. She points out: “Individuals learn when they modify existing conceptual structures, creating new links and integrating new concepts” (Jeffery-Clay 1998). It is this dynamic learning process, the role of individual active learners rather than passive information receivers that is emphasised in the constructivist learning theory.

In the museum context, some researchers believe that the museum is the perfect environment for constructivist learning since it provides various stimuli and sensational experiences (Falk and Dierking 1992: 114; Jeffery-Clay 1998: 5). However, critics argue that the object-rich environment or hands on experiences do not necessarily make the museum the perfect setting for constructivist learning since ‘mind on’ is more important than ‘hands on’ in the process of learning (Osborne 1998). Besides, there is very little empirical evidence to show what and how visitors actively construct their meanings in the museum context. Though constructivist theory helps us to focus on the learners (Osborne 1998: 9), nevertheless, knowing that visitors construct their own meaning is not enough to understand the visitors’ learning process and learning outcomes in the museum. Besides, visitors are not a group of homogenous people. They differ in age, sex, social and educational background. To discuss how they make meaning out of their visits, first, it is necessary to distinguish adult learners from children and school groups. Theories and literature review on adult learners would provide a further insight into the learning process of the subjects in the present research.

### **6.1.2 Adult Learners**

It is claimed that people continue to learn, whether in institutions or not (Anderson 1995). Life is a continuous learning process and people learn in various ways and styles. As the popularity of the idea of lifelong learning grows, the role that the museum plays in adult learning is gradually getting more attention. In this research,

the interviewees are all adults over twenty years old. To illustrate the meaning-making process of frequent adult visitors to the museum, it is necessary to review major educational theories of adult learners.

Unlike in formal education, research and theories in adult learning and informal learning were not developed until 1950s and 1960s. Cyril Houle, Allen Tough and Malcolm Knowles are among the few who first systematically investigated the characteristics and styles of adult learners (Knowles 1993). Different from the pedagogy in formal education, Knowles proposes a new term ‘andragogy’ to refer to the informal education of adult learners (Dufresne-Tasse 1995). It is defined as “the art and science of helping adults learn” (Knowles 1993: 32). Knowles singles out the difference of the two learning styles: “In essence, to the pedagogue the important thing is transmission of the content. To the andragogue the important thing is acquisition of the content” (1993: 31). To Knowles, the pedagogical model is widely applied in teaching school children while andragogical model, similar to the constructivist ideas, emphasises active learning and is more appropriate for adult learners. He has made a comparison between these two styles of learning:

Subject of assumption	Pedagogical Model	Andragogical Model
Direction of the learning process	Teacher-directed learning	Self-directed learning
Concept of the learner	Dependent personality	Increasingly self-directed organism
Role of learners’ experience	To be built on more than used	A rich resource for learning
Readiness to learn	Dictated by curriculum	Develops from life tasks and problems
Orientation to learning	Subject-centred	Task- or problem- centred
Motivation	External rewards and punishments	Internal incentives, curiosity

**Table 9: Comparison of Assumptions of Pedagogy and Andragogy**

(Source: Malcolm S. Knowles, 1993: 31)

From this table, it shows two fairly different approaches to learning. Adult learners, with more experience, therefore resources in life, are considered to be more self-directed and self-motivated (Allen 1993). Their learning objectives are also different. They learn not for credits but for tasks or problem solving (Anderson 1995). Their learning motivations are also generally regarded as associated with the development of their life stages (Baldwin et al. 1992; Gunther 1994). For example, for a pregnant woman, the knowledge of motherhood and baby rearing becomes very important in preparation for being a mother. She is likely to be more interested in this area of knowledge than before. To understand more about their learning motivations and behaviours, Gunther's summary of several characteristics of adult learners from Knowles' theory is helpful.

1. They are highly independent and self-directed in their choices of learning opportunities. Further, they teach themselves much of what they learn.
2. Their backgrounds and experiences provide rich resources for learning.
3. Phases of social development often motivate their choices of learning activities.
4. They choose learning opportunities that address a specific problem or that permit the information or skill to be used immediately (Gunther 1994: 121).

In general, adult learners are considered to be more independent in building on their own system and structure from their learning experience (Hiemstra 1993). Though Knowles' arguments are widely applied in understanding the motivations and behaviours of adult learners, they however cannot fully explain the learning experience of adult visitors in the context of museums. Unlike other learning settings, museums provide not only information and knowledge but also an object-rich environment with experiences of entertainment and relaxation. As Dufresne-Tassé points out, many adult visitors come to museums primarily for entertainment or social purposes, other than problem solving (246). Besides, visitors' museum experiences involve not only thoughts but also emotion and feelings. In other words, their learning activities in museums are both cognitive and affective, which are not always for

practical purposes only (Csikszentmihalyi and Hermanson 1994; Dufresne-Tasse 1995). Besides, different types of museums also provide very different learning experiences. Task-solving orientation might explain some visitors' motivations in the science museum but it hardly gives reasons for those adult visitors who choose to visit the art museum.

From data collected in this research, it shows that the learning process is both cognitive and affective. Thus, the research aims to elaborate what visitors have learned and how they have made their meanings, both cognitively and affectively in their museum visits. On the one hand, any effort that aims to generalise theories and patterns to understand and assess visitors' learning outcomes seems to be very difficult. On the other hand, it is essential for museum practitioners to understand this learning process in order to provide better service, and more research is underway to investigate this new territory.

## **6.2 Learning in the Museum**

Most empirical research has been conducted in the science museum or art museum, and most is about children's learning outcomes. There is little research concerning adult learners in history museums. In Chapter Five, from the analysis of interview data, some preliminary learning patterns have been discovered in different types of museums (See Table 8). In general, visitors come to museums to acquire new information but frequent visitors are usually quite familiar with the content of a particular museum's exhibition, therefore acquiring new information is not the only motivation and learning outcome of their visits. More complicated responses and different learning activities take place during their visits. For example, from the data analysis, apart from acquiring new information, visitors to a history museum have the following responses: reconstructing their personal experience into the historical framework, making comparison between the museum information with their prior knowledge and constructing their historical views. The most apparent response of visitors in the local history or community museums is to enhance their pride and sense

of place. Besides, many frequent visitors also have recollections in the museum and connect the present with the past. To summarise, visitors' responses and learning activities can be broadly divided into three main categories: learning, recollection and connection. Here it is necessary to clarify the idea of learning. Generally speaking, learning refers to various activities including both cognitive and affective learning outcomes. To facilitate the discussion, the learning outcomes discussed in this research relate mainly to cognitive activities, which are the focus of this chapter. The activities of recollection and connection will be investigated in the following two chapters.

Though visitors respond differently in different types of museum, one common activity in their learning is acquiring information. Before analysing how and what visitors learn in different types of museums, what information visitors acquire will be investigated in the next section.

### **6.2.1 Acquiring Information: Identifying Themes**

Understanding the motivations and characteristics of adult learners helps to set the current issue into context but more research is needed to understand the learning process of adults. It is pointed out that it is more difficult to assess the outcomes of cognitive learning than affective learning in the museum (Jeffery-Clay 1998). One way to understand how visitors acquire the information in the research is to ask them about the theme of the museum. Among the five museums researched, only the Taipei 228 Memorial Museum and the Peitou Hot Springs Museum provide leaflets for visitors. There is a small charge for the leaflet of the 228 Museum. The leaflet of the Peitou Hot Springs Museum is quite brief. Therefore, most visitors got their information directly from the museum exhibits. To identify visitors' learning outcome in comparison with the message that the museum staff intends to communicate, one question was asked. The question that the museum staff was asked was what message they would like visitors to get, and the visitors and volunteers were asked what they think the museum theme is. From the interview data, it is found that respondents were

able to answer the question asked by the researcher and identify the theme of the museum. How each respondent identifies the themes is summarised and listed below:

	BAI-MI CLOG MUSEUM	THE PEITOU HOT SPRINGS MUSEUM	THE I-LAN MUSEUM	THE HSINCHU GLASS MUSEUM	THE 228 MEMORIAL MUSEUM
Staff 1 A	Origin of clog /Community Involvement	Community Involvement, local history	Document & Memory/ To be proud of I-Lan	To understand glass & local industry	To show how Taiwanese survive in difficulty
Staff B	Pass tradition/ Community Involvement				To solve the ethnic conflicts
1	Community Involvement	The Local History	Development of I-Lan	Compare glass work of Taiwan with the world	Reminiscence/ Justice Done
2	Tradition Clog-making	History & Local Culture	Development of I-Lan	Glass art	History Lesson
3	Tradition	The Usage of Hot Springs	Development of I-Lan	Local Culture	Understand History
4	Pass Tradition Recollection	Local History	Development of I-Lan	Glass	Reconstruct History
5	Tradition/ Community Involvement	Local History	Recollection & Pass the Tradition	Glass & Its Production	The facts of 228 Incident

**Table 10: The Museum Themes Identified by Interviewees**

From this table, it can be seen that most visitors have identified one or two themes of the museum and they overlap. What factors influence visitors' identification of museum theme? Firstly, the content of exhibition and the way of display affect

visitors' ideas of museum theme. From the five cases, respondents in the I-Lan Museum of Local Political History easily identified the theme and it is very clear to them that the museum is about the development of I-Lan. L-2 pointed out:

What does the museum tell me...From the moment I enter the museum, I would feel it is about the whole development of I-Lan. I would understand about the development and politics of I-Lan. It is obvious. It is the local political history museum. That's it (Interviewee L-2, Female/Age: 20-35).

L-2 made a very precise statement about the theme of the museum while L-4 not only identified the main theme but also sub-themes displayed in the museum. He pointed out:

The theme of the museum, of course, as it is named as the history of the development of I-Lan. It starts from the beginning of the governmental management of I-Lan...Apart from history and culture, it also displays some electoral processes of all previous mayors because this building had been the residence of majors. So it includes displays of their lives, economic, political and cultural activities (Interviewee L-4, Male/Age: 36-50).

The content of exhibition sets the tone of visitors' ideas of the museum theme. For example, in the case of the Hsinchu Municipal Museum, there are five exhibition rooms, including one permanent exhibition of international glass art, one permanent exhibition of glass works by native artists, and one permanent exhibition about the development of the technique of glass making. Thus, visitors are able to compare different styles and techniques of artists around the world. G-1 indicated the message of the museum was:

The message is to juxtapose the Taiwanese glass works with glass works in the world. We can look and compare them at the same time. I feel I was too conservative before. Their glass works are really wonderful (Interviewee G-1,

Male/Age: 51-65).

In the case of the Bai-mi Clog Museum, three respondents thought the main theme was to preserve and pass on tradition, while one respondent thought it was to engage the community. One respondent thought both were the main themes of the establishment of the Bai-mi Clog Museum. For the museum staff, the museum is both for community involvement and the preservation of traditional clog culture. It is worth noticing that respondents not only identified the main theme, but also explained it with information they gathered from the museum. For example, recognising the importance of passing on tradition, B-4 also explained the origin and history of clog-making:

We would also like children to know how we wore clogs and let them know about our lifestyles. I will guess, including your grandparents, our ancestors had the experience of wearing them...Actually Taiwanese have worn clogs for a long time. Before that, we wore straw shoes or clothes shoes. Clogs were worn in ancient China but the tradition was broken for some time...Just as what is happening now (Interviewee B-4, Male/Age: 36-50).

Here the personal experience of wearing clogs is mixed with the information of the history of clogs provided by the museum. It shows that adult visitors do link the new information with their experience and make it a coherent structure of knowledge. If compared with the Peitou Hot Springs Museum, it is found that all interviewees have identified the local history or the culture of hot springs as the main themes. None of them have thought of the community involvement as the theme of the museum. However, in the interview of the museum staff in the Peitou Hot Springs Museum, P-a expressed a clear message that the derelict historical house was firstly discovered by the teacher and students of Peitou primary school, and its conversion into a museum was due to the continuous effort of the local community. She said:

The content of the museum might not be as rich as that of other museums.

However, the whole discovery process and its connection with the locality are what we feel special about this museum. Its roots are from the bottom up, from the locality, not top down. It has not been designated and established by people from above. If it were, the local residents would have not known where it is from. We think it is a very good example of the engagement of the community (Interviewee P-a, Female/Age: 20-35).

Though P-a thought that the community involvement is the spirit of the museum, respondents did not identify it from their museum visits. It is worth noticing that the exhibitions of both the Bai-mi Clog Museum and the Peitou Hot Springs Museum do not emphasise the engagement of the communities in their establishments. However, there is a major difference between the two museums in community engagement. After the establishment of the Peitou Hot Springs Museum, the funding and management came under the control of the Taipei Municipal Government. The museum staff is assigned as civil servants by the Taipei Bureau of Culture. The principal method of community engagement in the Peitou Hot Springs Museum is through the organization of volunteers, while the Bai-mi Clog museum is founded and is continuously run by the community residents themselves. It is easier for frequent visitors as well as volunteers to identify community engagement when the museum is actually run by the community itself. Visitors are greeted and tour guided by volunteers from the community and throughout their visits, they hear about the participation and engagement of community. Volunteers in the Peitou Hot Springs Museum were not responsible for the core management and decision-making in the museum, therefore, they did not regard the community engagement as one major theme of the museum.

Besides, visitors came to the museum with different backgrounds and agendas. For the older visitors, recollection plays a rather important role and is regarded as the main theme of the museum. For example, L-5 and P-1 thought the museum was for recollection and reminiscence. Also, personal experience influences their identification of the museum theme. As a person related to victims, P-1 expressed

another strong message of the museum theme, that is, the justice is done. For other respondents who are less involved with the 228 Incident, the main theme for them is to understand the history the 228 Incident. However, if we compare their responses with those of the museum staff, there is a slight difference between these two. For example, when asked about the messages that they expect visitors to acquire in the museum, one of the staff of the 228 Memorial Museum thinks they would be about the difficulties that the Taiwanese have been through, and the other thinks they would be about solving ethnic conflicts. From these accounts, it is clear that the museum staff hopes that the museum would communicate more complicated messages to its visitors. The museum staff in the I-Lan Museum of Local Political History also hope that visitors will have good personal recollections while in the museum and through understanding of local history, they would be proud of being local residents. In general, the museum staff is more concerned about the emotional and cognitive effects on visitors than merely information gathering. These effects are revealed in the discussion in the following section and Chapter Seven.

Despite the slightly different interpretations of the museum themes between visitors and museum staff, all respondents are able to acquire some of the information from the museum exhibition, connect it with their prior knowledge and experience, and identify the museum theme. In the next section, more details about how respondents interpret and reflect upon the information they gather will be examined and discussed.

### **6.3 Learning in the History Museum**

From the data analysis, apart from acquiring information, two learning patterns have been identified in the study of history museums in Taiwan: reconstructing personal experiences into a historical framework, interpreting and constructing historical views. Drawing on the data, these two learning patterns will be discussed in the following sections.

### **6.3.1 Reconstructing Personal Experiences in a Historical Framework**

First, visiting the history museum aids visitors to set their experiences in the chronological order of a social and historical context. Apart from changing their historical views, their learning practice is in constant dialogue with their personal experience. For example, visiting a history museum in Taiwan assists visitors to relocate their own personal learning experience in a social and political context, reflecting upon and comparing what they have learned in their formal school education with what they have acquired in their museum visits. L-4 expressed his reflection upon his formal education and said:

Well before the lifting of martial law, no one taught a course of Taiwanese studies. At that time, we only studied Chinese history- a grand history. After the lifting of martial law, we found there was also something very charming about Taiwan. For example, we studied the grand history and we can remember the big rivers and mountains in China, but I found that we don't even know the names of rivers and mountains nearby. Well, this raises one question. We don't know about our surroundings but we can remember the outside world very well (Interviewee L-4, Male/Age: 36-50).

From the interview, we can see L-4 reflects on the education he received and has started to think about the locality where he lives.

From data analysis, it is found that two political events have great influence on visitors and stand out as significant turning points on their lives and provide the framework to contextualise their memories. They are the 228 Incident in 1947, which initiated the white terror and KMT's totalitarian regime, and the second significant event, the lifting of the martial law, forty years later. Ten respondents have indicated the 228 Incident in their accounts of personal experiences, including five respondents interviewed in the 228 Memorial Museum. It is meaningful that five respondents interviewed in the other four museums have also referred to the 228 Incident as a

turning point in clarifying their opinions of social political issues, such as the issue of cultural identity. Some respondents' personal experiences and childhood memories are intertwined with the 228 Incident. It shows the important role that the 228 Incident has played in people's lives, especially for those who have lived through it. P-3 told about her schooling and language learning under the impact of the 228 Incident:

After the KMT came here and accepted Japan's surrender, there were the 228 Incident and the white terror. When I went to school as a little kid, we were not allowed to speak Taiwanese. If we spoke Taiwanese, we would get punished or fined (Interviewee P-3, Female/Age: 35-50).

If the 228 Incident had an inhibiting effect on people, the lifting of martial law signified a new and more liberating era. Four respondents have regarded the implement of the martial law had foreshadowed their lives and referred to the lifting of martial law has significantly changed their lives. B-1 explained the small impression made on him by the historical building of the I-Lan Museum of Local Political History before its conversion into the museum. He said: "We seldom came into the mayor's residence because it was under the martial law and there were police on guard all the time" (Interviewee B-1, Male/Age: 36-50). The spatial constraint coincided with the restriction on freedom of speech. After the lifting of the martial law, what is most significant, perhaps is the dissolution of the political taboos, and people are free to talk about the 228 Incident.

To sum up, visiting the history museum assists visitors to relocate their lives in a historical framework. From the data analysis, it is found that respondents apply historical events, mainly the 228 Incident and the lifting of martial law as reference points to reflect upon their personal experiences and life events. Memories and recollections are very often surrounded by these two historical events. Therefore, visiting a history museum in Taiwan facilitates the contextualisation of visitors' personal experiences in a historical framework. It at the same time provides a common big picture, a framework for visitors when discussing, interpreting and

communicating their personal experiences. From this process, personal identities are constantly shaping and collective identity are formed and constructed. To illustrate this process, how people interpret and communicate with the messages provided by the museum is discussed in the next section.

### **6.3.2 Challenging, Interpreting and Constructing Historical Views**

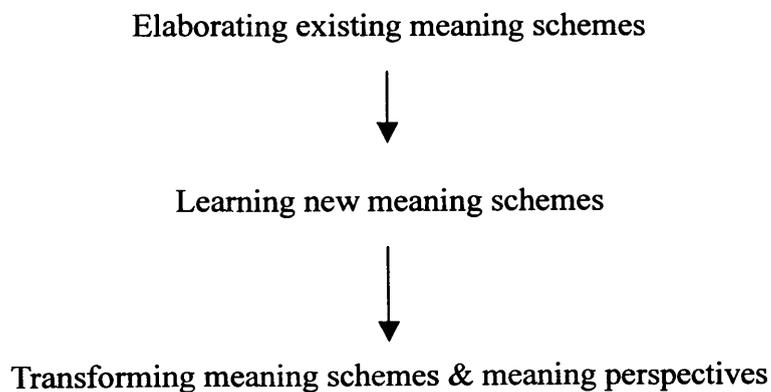
In addition to the acquisition of information, many cognitive learning activities take place in the museum. In general, visitors make links, compare information with their prior knowledge and construct their own interpretations and meanings. From the data collected from the history museums researched in Taiwan, it is found that many interviewees have undergone a process of dialogue, especially when they learn about controversial historical events.

It is natural for visitors to associate the 228 Incident with contemporary ethnic conflicts in Taiwan. Many non-visitors think that the 228 Memorial Museum fuels the tension between different ethnic groups. Volunteers observed that a great tension arose between the museum and visitors, especially during the first year of opening. Two extreme reactions were reported by volunteers and the museum staff interviewed. For those who had experienced or suffered from the 228 Incident, some of them had very strong feeling about the leaders of KMT party during that period of time and dug out the eyes of Chiang Kai-shek's photograph out of rage. On the other hand, some other visitors, mainly mainlanders, found that it was hard for them to accept the establishment of the 228 Memorial Museum. They thought that the representation of the 228 Incident was not true, and considered that it was the Taiwanese people who killed the mainlanders.

Different views and ideas are constantly in contradiction and dialogue in the history Memorial Museum. For the younger generation, there is a great gap between what they have been taught at school and what they have learned in the museum. Before the lifting of the martial law, Taiwanese history and geography had been discouraged in schools and the 228 Incident was taboo, which no one dared to talk about in public. To

the younger generation, visiting the history museum reveals repressed history as well as new perspectives on the history and culture of their localities. From the researcher's observation, young visitors in the Taipei 228 Memorial Museum were shocked by the brutality of the Incident first and some even felt cheated since they learned nothing about this major event of Taiwanese history through their school years.

How do visitors learn in the local history museums in Taiwan? The perspective of the transformation theory is helpful in explaining this process. It believes that "learning is understood as the process of using a prior interpretation to construe a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of one's experience in order to guide future action" (Mezirow 1997:13). Therefore, the learning activity involves a series of dialogues and debates between the prior knowledge and new information; through the dialogical process, learners transform their original concepts and construct new perspectives. The processes are as follows:



**Fig. 8: The Transformation Theory of Learning**

(Source: Mezirow 1997: 7)

Through museum visits, visitors gather information and compare it with their existing knowledge. If the information agrees with their prior knowledge, they keep and expand their original knowledge structure with added information. On the other hand,

if the new information is in contradiction with their prior knowledge, they either reject it entirely or modify their original knowledge structure to accommodate the new information. As a result, they might change their historical views. The conflict is most intense and the change is most obvious in the 228 Memorial Museum. As a tour guide, T-4 has experienced confronting challenges and questions from visitors. She explained how she interpreted the 228 Incident and her views towards the controversial ethnic issue:

The 228 museum aims to reconstruct historical fact. Since we have been repressed for more than fifty years and not allowed to talk about it, it becomes an unrecoverable wound. No one knows the facts; we only know it causes a big problem of ethnic harmony. In fact, the 228 Incident is not an issue of ethnic conflict. It is a repression by the ruling of the ruled... So the victims are not only most Taiwanese people but also some mainlanders (Interviewee T-4, Female/Age: 51-65).

From her experience, she found some visitors did change their attitudes and hostility towards the museum and accepted her interpretation and re-thought the whole issue again. She reported one elderly visitor, a mainlander, who was very emotional and protested that the museum did not present the historical facts as soon as he entered the museum. After listening to the tour guide and visiting the museum, he came back and told her:

Now I realise. Thank you. If it were not you, I would not have been patient enough to visit the whole exhibition. Now I understand what you mean. I understand it was the massacre and the suppression by the ruling class of the ruled. It was not because of an ethnic conflict (Interviewee T-4, Female/Age: 51-65).

Though from time to time, there are still conflicts and disagreements about the representation and exhibition of the museum, it shows that the patience of the

museum volunteers and staff helps mediate to visitors the information provided by the museum and assist them in obtaining a more holistic view of the incident. It demonstrates that not only the exhibition but also the volunteers and tour guides contribute to shaping the understanding and interpretations of the historical incident.

The local history museum, in this case, provides a different perspective and information on learning history. It shows that visitors have undergone a series of dialogues to reflect upon their prior knowledge in comparison with the new information. Through this learning process, some respondents are able to construct their own historical views. T-5 explained his view of the 228 Incident:

Of course, everyone has his own point of view. From my political viewpoint, I think it was the people's rebellion against suppression by the government. The people's revolt was just. Of course, if it happened today, there would be no need to rebel under the judicial system. But it was a natural reaction in those circumstances. Secondly, it was the corruption of the KMT that brought about the revolt of the people. In the second phase, there were also a few mainlanders killed. But in the third phase, it was the KMT troops, rather than the mainlanders, who massacred innocent people... (Interviewee T-5, Male/Age: 51-65).

Therefore, from the data analysis, it is found that respondents in the history museums researched have undergone a series of dialogues to compare the new information provided by the museum with their prior knowledge. Through comparison and debate, sometimes with the assistance of the voluntary tour guides, visitors are able to expand their original knowledge and construct their own perspectives on history. In their visits, visitors receive similar information provided by museums to examine their own prior knowledge. Though visitors come to the history museums with different backgrounds and ethnicities, the common history provides a framework for them to mediate their identities and construct their historical views, which contribute to the formation of collective cultural identities.

## **6.4 Aesthetic Pleasure in the Art Museum**

Previously, study on how visitors learn and make meaning has been centred on visitors' responses in the context of history museums. However, as it is pointed out, visitors respond differently to historical objects and works of art. In this section, more discussion on how visitors interpret artworks will be analysed, drawing data from respondents' answers to what their favorite exhibit is in the Bai-mi Clog Museum and in the Hsinchu Glass Museum.

In Silverman's Ph. D research, she analysed how pairs of visitors discussed the exhibits in both the history museum and art museum. She found five basic categories of responses in visitors' talk: establishment, evaluation, absolute object description, relating special knowledge, and relating personal experience (Silverman 1990:90). She also observed the slight different responses for visitors to the art context from those in the history museum. Visitors to the art museum like to identify, to name the artwork and artist. Besides, they like to describe the artworks, analyse them, and give accounts for their aesthetic judgment. Evaluation therefore plays an important role in their interpretation (1990:100). Basically, these learning activities are aesthetic in nature and two different strategies of evaluation and interpretation are observed in the present study.

### **6.4.1 Aesthetic Appreciation: The Resemblance of Nature**

From the data analysis, it is the aesthetic pleasure that determines respondents' choice of their favourite artworks in the museum. One key element of visitors' aesthetic pleasure is the feeling of being comfortable or natural. For example, B-2 explained why she likes clogs with animal patterns on them. She said:

I liked small sized clogs before. Now I prefer big-sized clogs. I don't like those which are made for wearing; I like them for decoration...I like animal and bird pattern... They are beautiful. Because they painted animals on the small clogs, I feel very comfortable (Interviewee B-2, Female /Age: 36-50).

Likewise, B-1 expressed similar ideas when he talked about his favorite clogs.

We have got so many clogs. Sometimes our paintings are of scenery such as mountains and water or the scenery of To-fu corner in NanFanwao (the name of a village); they are nice. I quite like to appreciate those clogs...I feel they are more natural (Interviewee B-1, Male /Age: 36-50).

Feeling natural or comfortable becomes one of the criteria for aesthetic pleasure. Visitors in the Hsinchu Municipal Museum also expressed a similar idea. One respondent judged the artwork by its quality of being natural. G-5 talked about one artwork he is particularly fond of:

This is a piece of glasswork in which the colour of blue is changed due to the temperature. The colour becomes sky blue after dyeing...Besides, there is a little worm on it. It seems very natural, though it is created artificially (Interviewee G-5, Male /Age 51-65).

For these respondents, the resemblance to nature makes them feel comfortable. It is mainly because the artwork connects them with the outside world that they are familiar with. A natural scene is also more likely to be connected with their personal experience. Feeling familiar is one of the elements that make some visitors enjoyable in their museum visits while some others have a rather different view towards art. For them, art should be something different or even detached from the everyday reality.

#### **6.4.2 Abstract and Non-Practical Elements**

Not all respondents search for a resemblance to nature in the artwork. Some respondents are more interested in looking for aesthetic pleasure from abstract elements. These respondents have fairly different views about the idea of art. B-5 explained why she chose a pair of clogs with bright circles on them:

First, it uses the circle in the pattern. In aesthetics, it is the basic geometric design such as squares and circles. From my perspective, clogs are traditional objects. This pair creates contrast and conflict by combining a traditional object with modern design. It creates effects of fun (Interviewee B-5, Female /Age: 20-35).

As Silverman points out visitors in the art museum would like to give objects absolute description and evaluation (1990:123). Similarly, B-5 first analysed the artwork and gave her reasons of her choice. She is not the only respondent who seeks aesthetic pleasure in the abstraction in artworks. In a similar vein, G-3 points out that for him, the value of art lies on its non-practical purpose. He explained:

While I have been here, I have visited fifteen special exhibitions. Among them, the Japanese Kuni Aki Kuro Ki's exhibition (name of a Japanese glass artist) impresses me most. It has the ...value of art and aesthetics as a whole. For others, they are more practical...but I feel it is more valuable from the perspective of aesthetics (Interviewee G-3, Male/Age: 20-35).

In the Hsinchu Municipal Glass Museum, there are five exhibition rooms. Among them, there is one permanent exhibition of native glass artwork and one exhibits a collection of international artists. Visitors can very often compare the artworks by the native artists with the international artists. When asked why he particularly likes the Italian glass art, G-1 explained:

Our Taiwanese glass is based on the idea of practical purpose. They (Italian) are in a little bit more abstract artistic phase. We are still in another phase. Everyone makes glass to earn a living (Interviewee G-1, Male/Age: 51-65).

Both G-3 and G-1 judged the artistic value from its non-practical purpose. For G-1, the Italian glass art is more artistic because it is more abstract, while Taiwanese glass

art is more practical, therefore less artistic. Based on this criterion, he further judged that Italian glass art is in a more developed phase. Likewise, G-4 also preferred glass artwork than that experimental glass exhibited in the temporary exhibition room. The different styles between the international artists and native artists' artworks provide visitors a platform to compare and shape their aesthetic judgment.

To sum up, visitors seek mainly aesthetic pleasure in the art museum, though they give different attributions according to their idea of art. Two different attributes are found in the two cases studied here: a resemblance to nature and a non-practical abstract element. From data analysis, some respondents seek for similar elements in artworks while others define the aesthetic value from its non-practical purpose and abstraction. B-2 showed a combination of both elements. While enjoying watching animal patterns painted on clogs, she prefers smaller or bigger clogs because they are not wearable and therefore purely for decoration.

Other researches also found similar results. In Hooper-Greenhill and Moussouri's research in visitors' interpretive strategies at Nottingham Castle Museum and Art Gallery, they have identified two themes: representational and abstract art, and the value of art in everyday life. From data analysis, this research suggests that visitors with minimum education are more likely to show a preference of representative art (Hooper-Greenhill and Moussouri 2001: 14). Their research also confirms that:

...people search out art museums because they perceive them to offer experiences that satisfy desires connected to their own perceptions of self. Visitors are active in developing their own interpretations of what they see and experience in the museum, and this interpretation is deeply embedded in their prior knowledge and experience (Hooper-Greenhill and Moussouri 2001: 36).

Visitors come to the art museum with various motivations and the art museum provides a pressure-free environment of learning. Due to the limited data in the present research, it is impossible to investigate visitors' interpretation strategies in the

art museum in great detail. However, comparing these two cases, it shows that the content and context of exhibition contributes shaping up visitors' formation of aesthetic judgment. For example, in the case of Hsinchu Municipal Glass Museum, visitors are able to look at and compare artworks of artists of different nationalities; therefore they have opportunities to establish a more international view of glass art. For visitors in the Bai-mi Clog Museum, it is not only the aesthetic pleasure that community residents are looking for. What is more important for them is to share their experiences and strengthen their identity of the Bai-mi community through the clog-making and management of the museum. In the next section, more analysis on how community residents learn through participation of community affairs is going to be discussed.

## **6.5 Co-Learning in the Community Museum**

Compared with visitors in the history and art museum, learning in the Bai-mi Clog museum provides a rather different experience. Without a traditional display of a collection and with only a few panels, the learning experience is through the clog demonstration and active participation in clog painting. More importantly, for community residents, it is through the participation and co-learning that makes the museum experience significant. Unlike earlier researchers such as Piaget, whose research focused on the cognitive developments of individuals, researchers have started to investigate learning from different views and angles. They shift their focus from individual learners to the social meanings of learning. For example, Wenger believes that learning is a social process and it is an integral part of our everyday lives. In his theory, everyone belongs to different communities – a family, a class or a society, through the engagement of these different communities, the individual shares their experiences and information with other community members. It is through the engagement of different communities that a person learns. To Wenger, learning is an ongoing process embedded into life rather than a separate activity (Wenger 1998).

Others, such as Curry and Cunningham adopt a more radical approach against the

traditional structure and power relationship of learning. To deconstruct the traditional power structure of the tutor and pupil, they propose the idea of co-learning which embraces a concept of learning community in which everyone is learning from each other. There is no hierarchy between teachers and students, no distinction between the owner of knowledge and the receiver of it. They state: “ Co-learning is one way to equalize power relationships and to deny socially constructed privilege or the privileging of one knowledge over another” (Curry and Cunningham 2000:75). The theory suggests that everyone is equal in making a contribution to learning. They also reject the concept of andragogy because it emphasised on the individual learners and ignored the collective nature of learning. Besides, for the underprivileged, self-directed learning is not adequate for them. They need more support from the learning group (2000: 77).

The concept of co-learning is very helpful in providing insight into the learning process of community residents. The idea of andragogy might explain the individual adult visitor who visits the museum with his or her own agenda, however for the community museum, the theory of andragogy is not sufficient to explain their learning activities. For the community residents in the Bai-mi Clog museum, the idea of co-learning is central. They run the museum together and through the process, they have faced all kinds of problems. They have to work together and find resources to solve problems. As described in the case study of Chapter four, the Bai-mi Clog museum is continually growing and developing while the community residents learn and extend their experiences together. As B-1 explained:

My interest in clogs grew through participation with other community members. We get together in the evening to learn about clogs. That is how I extend my interests (Interviewee B-1, Male/Age: 36-50).

Here, B-1 learned about the tradition and history of clogs with other community residents in their evening meetings. It is through the community meeting that residents gradually extend their interests and knowledge in clogs. It is not through a traditional

didactic method that community residents learn about clogs; it is through a learning community that they establish shared experience and friendship. B-3 expressed his experience of learning through entertainment:

Since we have retired, we need some fun. It is the same as other leisure activities. It is more interesting to work here since we get friends here. (Interviewee B-3, Male/Age: 51-65).

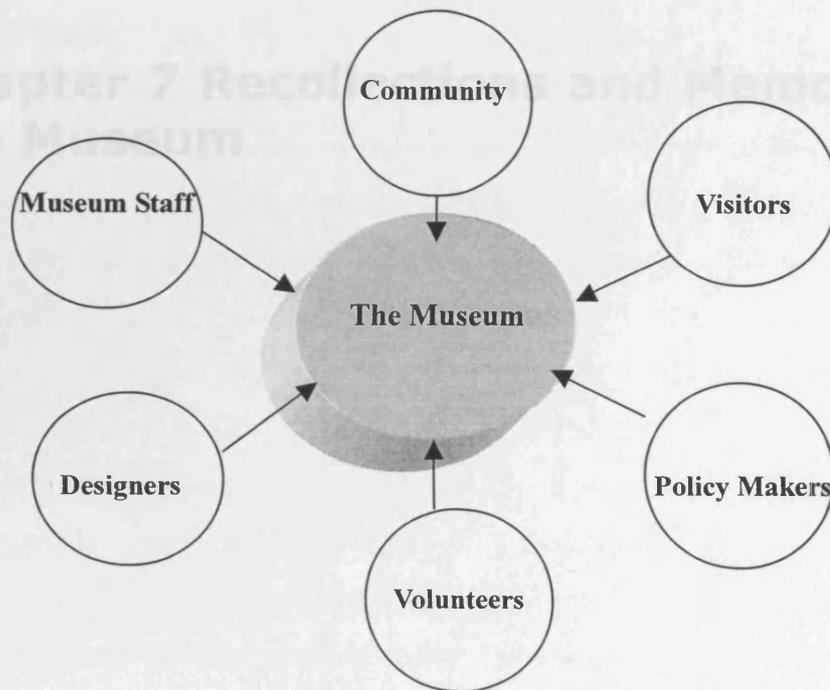
It is the companionship of other community residents and the learning community that is established that makes B-3's museum experience interesting and enjoyable. Drawing on the concept of co-learning, the museum as a community of learning will be further elaborated in the concluding section.

## **6.6 Conclusion**

In this chapter, it has been suggested that visitors' learning outcomes vary in different types of museums. In the history museum, some strategies are applied by visitors: acquiring new information, comparing with prior knowledge, and constructing their own historical views. In the art and craft museum, respondents like to identify the artwork, describe and evaluate it. In the community museum, apart from the nature of its exhibits, community residents gather and learn together. It is the co-learning that characterises their learning process. Silverman's research has recorded discussions by pair groups and calculated the frequency of different acts occurring in the history and art museum. She finds regardless of whether in the art museum or history museum relating personal experience is the most common component of museum talk in general (1990: 124). In this research, similar findings are emerging. Though differing in the learning process and outcomes, some similar strategies such as comparison between the museum information with the prior knowledge and comparison between different exhibits have been noted. Through the comparison, visitors are able to construct their own historical views or established their own criteria of aesthetic judgment. More importantly, life experience plays an important part in their learning.

Researchers have claimed that self-directed learning and the use of the personal experience as a learning resource are the two main characteristics of adult learners (Allen 1993; Brookfield 1986:25; Knowles 1993). This research reveals that in the museum context, visitors are likely to contextualise their personal experiences in a historical framework.

In the museum, visitors are able to explore the exhibition and information freely. Some messages might be in contradiction with their original knowledge, while others might be totally new, adding to and extending their existing knowledge. More importantly, no matter whether they came to the museum alone or with companions, visitors are placed in a learning community and share with other visitors the same information and learning environment provided by the museum. That is to say, on the one hand, individual visitors make their own meaning out of their visits but at the same time, the museum provides a platform and every participant constitutes a part of this learning community. As Matusov and Rogoff claim: “ Museums can be considered as places where different practices and their participants can meet, learn from each other as peripheral members in different communities, and contribute to each other’s practices” (1995: 101). The museum therefore constructs a field for free-choice learning and interactions for different communities including museum staff, designers, the policy makers, volunteers, visitors, etc. All these diverse communities help to shape the learning in the museum (Matusov and Rogoff 1995: 102). Their relationship is illustrated as follows:



**Fig. 9: The Learning Community**

There are more participants from different communities who can be added on the list, such as the media and school teachers. Different communities help to shape and contribute to the learning in the museum. From the data analysis, the co-learning is most evident in the community museum, as found in the case study in the Bai-mi Clog Museum. However, the interview data also indicates the important role of the volunteers in assisting visitors' learning. The museum thus provides a setting for free-choice informal learning, and through the constant interactions with the museum information and other co-learners from different communities, be it the visitors, volunteers or the museum staff, one's historical views, ideas of art and identity are constantly being negotiated and shaped.

# **Chapter 7 Recollections and Memories in the Museum**

## **Introduction**

Visitors come to the museum, not only to learn and obtain new information. For local residents, the historical houses and the exhibitions of local history and craft very often recall many memories. Visiting the museum is an emotionally laden experience and embedded with recollection and reminiscence. In this chapter, how frequent visitors recollect and how the presentation of material culture in the museum helps to trigger their memories will be investigated. After a brief discussion of the nature of memories in general and memories in the museum, this chapter presents and illustrates ten categories of museum memories found in the interview data. To understand how local residents recollect in relation to the material culture of the museum during their visits, the discussion is divided into two parts. The museum architecture, the historical building, is itself the tangible evidence of history and constructs a special site and space for recollection. In the first part of the chapter, recollection in relation to the museum architecture will be discussed; five categories have emerged from the interview data. In the second part, the association of museum exhibits with respondents' memories will be analysed to see what role the objects play in visitors' recollections. Drawing on data, five more categories are developed in this part of the discussion. By so doing, this chapter wishes to provide insights into the understanding of the nature and content of visitors' memories in relation to the construction of cultural identity in the museum.

### **7.1 Personal & Collective Memories**

The objective of this chapter is to discuss how frequent visitors reflect on the past in museums. It is believed that through recollection and imagination, frequent visitors are able to connect themselves with the historical past and establish their cultural identities. Before analysing how visitors recollect in the context of the museum, it is necessary to review the literature to understand the nature of memories and research into memories in the museum.

Stimulus for memories exists everywhere. They might be evoked by a song, a photograph or a railway ticket. Researchers have investigated the nature of memories from different aspects such as cognitive psychology, educational theory and sociology. Psychologists and educators are more concerned about the biological function of memories and the role that memories play in learning. Sociologists and historians, on the other hand, are more interested in the social role of memories. Applying psychoanalytic theory, King proposed two contrasting models of memories: the process of memories reconstructed in narrative and the construction of the self who does the remembering (King 2000: 11). In a like manner, Assman divided memories into “communicative memory” and “cultural memories”. The former refers to memories evoked through everyday communication and the latter relates to memories collected and fixed “in the form of objectivized culture” (Assman 1995: 128). In general, there are two perspectives in the discussions of memories: one perspective is about how the individual remembers and the other is how society collects and stores memories through various social and cultural institutions (Thelen 1989: 1117). Following these two lines, theories on memories will be briefly reviewed. By so doing, I wish to shed light on how visitors recollect in the museum.

### **7.1.1 How Do People Remember?**

The preservation of memories is essential to the identity of the individual. In many films and dramas, the loss of one’s memories directly links to the loss of his or her identity, which very often triggers a series of misunderstanding and sometimes tragedies. A person without memories is a person without self-identity. How do people acquire and accumulate memories? Studies on memories could be broadly divided into two types: personal memory and collective memory. The personal memory refers to “an individual’s ability to conserve information” while the collective memory “comprises recollections of the past that are determined and shaped by the group” (Zelizer 1995: 214). Though memories seem to be very individually conceived, recent research reveals that memories are indeed collectively constructed. In other words, it is argued that individual memories are never independent of the broader society and

culture, which provides the material and shapes individuals' memories.

On this part, Silverman's discussion in the museum context is especially useful. She identifies two needs of museum visitors: self-identity and group identity. Self-identity relates to personal involvement such as reminiscence and imagination while group identity connects to the community such as sharing and storytelling. Silverman's distinction certainly provides a valuable pattern for observing visitors' experiences, but in reality it overlooks the fact that these two experiences quite often overlap. One's reminiscences also evoke his or her relationship with others and his or her role in this relationship. Likewise, shared memories are also intertwined with personal memory. The process of sharing and constructing memories build what Halbwachs calls "collective memory." Coser elaborates Halbwachs' ideas and claims: "It is, of course individuals who remember, not groups or institutions, but these individuals, being located in a specific group context, draw on that context to remember or recreate the past" (1992: 22). Halbwachs emphasised the shared nature of memories and argued that the reconstruction of the past must start from the shared data of collective memories (Halbwachs 1980: 31). He believes that most memories recollected are never independent from the context - the group of people or locations that we are familiar with and with whom we shared our memories. Therefore, the collective memory "is not a given but rather a socially constructed notion" (Coser 1992: 22). Likewise, in discussion on the nature of memories, Kavanagh also points out that "memory is historically conditioned and the act of remembering is part of the social process of maintaining knowledge of the past" (2000: 6-7). Thus, Thelen indicates two points in the study of memory. First, memory is socially constructed rather than reproduced, and secondly, it is constructed in interaction with the broader society (Thelen 1989). Though Halbwachs did not include the museum as an important place for constructing collective memory, the increasing number of museums and its engagement with social issues make it an important public space for memory, recreation and recollection. In the next section, how society recollects and how the museum helps to shape collective memories through material culture is discussed.

### **7.1.2 Memories in the Museum**

As it is claimed, memories are material and embodied in various artefacts and cultural forms (Radley 1990:47; Urry 1996:50; Zelizer 1995:232). Researchers have been interested in investigating how memories are restored and passed on from one generation to another generation through all kinds of material culture such as folklore, festivals, rituals, artefacts and heritages. Through various cultural and material forms, people are able to understand the tradition and world around them, and furthermore connect the past and present in a vision of future.

What is the nature of memories in the museum? As mentioned, there are various types of memories materialised in different forms; some are embodied in verbal forms such as folklores and some are in pictorial forms such as paintings. Museum memories are firstly expressed through tangible material culture. In other words, objects and the physical context of the museum construct the primary data of visitors' memories. They function to furnish recollection, stimulate remembering and form records of living memories (Kwint 1999: 2). Therefore, memory in the museum is very often triggered and mediated through images or objects at the first level. Visitors are able to look at, and sometimes touch and smell the objects exhibited. Besides, along side and interwoven with objects, the museum also presents and constructs a narrative, a theme or a story. Hence, the objects in the museum do not remain silent; they speak through their quality and quantity and constitute a part of the story in the theme that the museum presents. Pearce indicates four principal modes of material culture in the museum: material as relics, material as art and treasure, the past illustrated in narrative and the past as re-creation (Pearce 1993: 196). These four modes provide a good thread to understand the role and value that objects play in the museum.

Secondly, memory recollected in the museum is selective and institutionalised. By collecting and exhibiting, the museum has had to subject itself to the cultural politics of memories (Hallam and Hockey 2001: 8-9). That is to say, the museum is an institution which officially decides what is worthy of preservation and what is not. On

the one hand, it constructs what is to be remembered, but on the other hand, it also chooses what is to be forgotten (Hallam and Hockey 2001; Urry 1996). As Urry elaborates: “forgetting is as socially structured as is the process of remembering” (1996: 50). Fehr further indicates that remembering and forgetting coexist, and are two sides of the same coin. That is to say, it is equally important to remember as to forget; they are in constant dialectics and constitute human identities (Fehr 2000: 46). By selecting what is to be collected and what is to be exhibited, the museum in a way determines what is to be remembered and what to be forgotten. Therefore, it is argued that the museum solidifies memories’ meanings and transforms private memories into the material of public memories (Sherman 1995: 52-53). Researchers have claimed that once living memories enter into the museum, they become mummified, lose their relationship with the group of people who craft meanings, and provide a coherent meaning for visitors to assimilate (Assman 1995: 128; Brower 1999: 90-92; Sherman 1995: 71). Herrmann and Plude, however, think that the museum memories “include some sense of rarity or uniqueness with associated feelings of reverence and a philosophical content regarding the relationship between the visitor and the museum exhibits” (Herrmann and Plude 1995: 55). To summarise, the nature of museum memories can be described as follows:

1. They are embodied through material culture and interwoven into the narrative or theme that the museum intends to present.
2. They are selective.
3. They are institutional.
4. They are objectified and fix life memories.

Apart from these rather passive views of the museum memories, it is worth noticing that it is the visitors who make senses, interpret and construct meanings in the museum. Though limited to the objects selected and presented by the museum, museum professionals have become aware that visitors are able to associate the exhibition with memories and create their individual meanings in their visits (Hooper-Greenhill and Moussouri 2002; Silverman 1995). The museum is not only a

place for learning but also a site for recollections and reminiscence, which very often provides various possibilities and prospects for visitors. As Kavanagh points out: “Working with memories implicitly means working with emotions, with the past, present and the future” (Kavanagh 2002: 111). For example, some researchers and practitioners have explored the therapeutic potential of the museum such as providing the opportunity for older people to socialize, for hospital patients to talk about art and themselves, or for veterans to deal with traumatic experiences (Carrington 1999; Kavanagh 2002; Silverman 2002). Hence, the critique that the museum imparts only a fixed set of memories is not adequate to explain visitors’ experiences in the museum.

Visitors, as Hooper-Greenhill indicates, are active agents who communicate and interpret the objects and material culture through their own varied knowledge backgrounds, personal interests, and social class (Hooper-Greenhill 1995). In the communication model proposed by Hooper-Greenhill (See Fig.1, page 14), she identifies the museum communication as a two-way process and the outcome results from influences from both sides. Similarly, in discussion of the formation of museum memories, it needs to consider all kinds of inputs during the process. Applying the same model, the researcher believes that the formation of museum memories is a process mediating between official history and personal memories, and the memories are constructed and shared by a group of people for the present aims (Zelizer 1995). Memories are, therefore, collective in nature. To comprehend how people construct and share memories in the museum, a similar model is suggested to explain the relation among the three different components of museum memories:



**Fig. 10: The Relationship of Different Memories in The Museum**

It is known that the museum has become an important site for reminiscence but little is known about how and what visitors recollect in the museum. From the interview data, it is found that recollection is an important part of frequent visitors' museum experiences and contributes to the formation of cultural identities. In the following sections, I will investigate the data and provide some perspectives on how and what people recollect in their museum visiting.

To facilitate discussion, the memories recollected by respondents are divided into two parts in terms of the material forms that trigger their memories. First, it is found that the historical museum building plays an important role in triggering respondents' recollection, and five types of memories recollected in historical buildings are discovered from the data: recollection of a life episode, memories of household life of the past, childhood memory, reconstruction of a historical event and reflection, connection and creation of memories. Secondly, some exhibits, especially household objects and photography have the power to associate respondents with memories. From the data, there are also five types of memories prompted by exhibits: the experience of using objects, the economic condition of the past, the relationship with family, the collective trauma of the historical tragedy and the loss of youth.

In the following two sections, more data will be drawn upon to analyse and explain how respondents recollect in response to the historical building and exhibits.

## **7.2 Memories Collected by Historical Buildings**

Research has indicated that most visitors have memories towards the museum's architecture (Falk 1988). Lowenthal identifies that the surrounding milieu very often works as the repository of memories (Lowenthal 1985: 16). Similarly, Halbwachs claims that collective memories are always associated with a place and location. He indicates: "every collective memory unfolds within a spatial framework...we can understand how we recapture the past only by understanding how it is, in effect, preserved by our physical surrounding" (Halbwachs 1980: 140). Notably, revisiting a place very often brings back those memories of the past since a place and particularly a building constructs a field independent from the outside world for people to contemplate. As mentioned, in the present research, all five museums are housed in historical buildings. All of them were used for official purposes and not open to the general public, however, they still played a part in local residents' lives because of their characteristics. Summarising Lowenthal's concepts of heritage, Urry identifies four characteristics of old houses: solidity, continuity, authority and craft (Urry 1999: 224). He further explains the ideas of solidity of old houses because they have survived through years and they provide links, a continuity between the past and present. Besides, they are usually built by craftsmen and signify an age or tradition (1999: 224). From data analysis, it shows that these characteristics of old houses have impressed visitors and construct a unique part of their recollections.

From the interview data, when asked if they had been to the historical buildings before their conversion into museums, thirteen respondents said that they had some impression of the buildings. Five of them have been into the historical buildings on special occasions, others simply passed by them. Comparing their impressions of the past with the present, they recalled various feelings and reflections during their visits. Through analysis of data, some patterns and categories of how frequent visitors recalled memories in the historical buildings have been observed across five cases. Analysing the interview data, five different patterns of memories recalled in the

# **SPECIAL NOTE**

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Bai-mi Clog Museum, objects are collected and exhibited by the museum professionals and scholars.<sup>39</sup> Through the exhibition, the objects have been grouped together to present a system of beliefs and messages about a certain time and its values. It is no secret that museums very often intend to convey the dominant culture and enhance prevailing ideology, though recently there is a tendency to engage communities and the general public in the process of collecting. For example, the Museum of London engaged the local communities and societies in selecting objects that are meaningful to them in the “Collecting 2000” Exhibition in 2000<sup>40</sup>. Similarly, one main exhibition area of the Bai-mi Clog Museum displays clogs made by community residents in the workshop. However, the scene in general is changing only slowly in Taiwan as well in other parts of the world; most policies and collections are in the hands of experts.

Under these circumstances, objects in the museum are not owned or used by visitors personally, therefore their relationship with visitors is less personal but often functions as a channel to link personal with public memories. In other words, to most visitors, they don't have direct memories of objects in the museum. How do they trigger visitors' memories? From the findings in the initial data analysis in Chapter five, the present research supports what Silverman found earlier that visitors in different types of museums have different responses to exhibits (Silverman 1990: 40). For example, many objects in local history museums resemble something that visitors have been familiar with or used before, and through free association or recollection, the artifacts very often invite and trigger visitors' memories of things in the past. The objects in the 228 Memorial Museum, a holocaust museum, on the other hand are more about the ritual of commemoration than as materials for personal recollection. They are a series of icons and images uncovering as well as healing collective grief. Objects in the art museum provide more aesthetic pleasure and a novel experience for visitors.

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<sup>39</sup> In the case of the Bai-mi Clog Museum, there is hardly a collection in the traditional definition. Most clogs exhibited are at the same time for sale and many others on display are made by community residents. Only a few pairs of clogs are regarded to have historical value.

<sup>40</sup> From the leaflet of the museum of London, it states: “Collecting 2000 invites London groups, clubs and societies to select and donate to the Museum of London one item, object or image that, for them, summarises who they are at the start of the twenty-first century.” This exhibition was held in September, 2000.

Recent research has also identified a range of responses and experiences that visitors have in the art museum such as story-making, reminiscence and personal association and experience (Hooper-Greenhill and Moussouri 2000; Hooper-Greenhill and Moussouri 2001).

Bearing in the mind that people respond differently in different types of museums, in the following sections, more data will be drawn upon to analyse how people recollect in response to museum exhibits across five cases researched. By so doing, it is hoped to provide some insights into how visitors relate, craft meanings and construct their personal memories and identities through objects in the context of the museum.

### **7.3.1. The Experience of Using Objects**

From the interview data, it is found that visitors are most interested in objects that they have used before. Of course, the museum exhibits are not what they owned and used, but they very often remind them of the experience of using it. This experience is found most in local community museums or history museums where exhibits have been collected locally. In the case of the I-Lan Museum of Local Political History, the exhibit that attracts most people's interest is the old bathtub, which has been gradually replaced by the modern bathtub and is rare in households now (See Plate 11). Only a few people living in remote areas might continue to use this old style of bathtub. One interviewee told me that he felt it was particularly dear to him because he had used a similar one in his childhood:

Such as the bathtub, the pulo for bath (pulo is bathtub in Japanese), we used it when we were little. Such as the toilet, the veng kan (toilet in Taiwanese dialect), the one with a top, I used them all in Japanese accommodation when I was little...Because in the old days, there were no modern facilities, it was stuck there and stank, so we used the top...We used them all, so I feel it is very dear to me (Interviewee I-5, Male/Age: 51-65).

Those exhibits which visitors are familiar with tend to invoke some memories of

using them in the past. Besides, the memories of using those objects also invite visitors to compare the past with the present. Visitors to the Bai-mi Clog Museum like to compare the products made by traditional craft with modern ones made by machines. B-2 pointed out:

It is good to let younger generations see - they are solid. If you compare...well they were better. Even though we produce shoes quickly by machine now, the hand-made products before were really nice. They were really smart. I feel people before were more practical and produced solid objects (Interviewee B-2, Female/Age: 36-50).

Others will tend to think about the strengths of the traditional craft. B-3 compared the clogs with modern shoes and thought:

Wearing clogs is good for your health. Our feet don't stink. Good circulation and sometimes it can give you a foot massage. It helps your blood circulation. If you wear modern shoes, your feet smell (Interviewee B-3, Male/Age: 51-65).

Visiting the local history museum not only brings back to visitors the memories of using those objects but also encourages them to compare the hand-made objects in the past with their modern equivalent. The data shows that people tend to think things were better in the past. It is, what Lowenthal called 'nostalgia' of modern people. He criticized nostalgia for making people think that very old thing is 'necessarily good' (Lowenthal 1985:4). I will return to this issue in the conclusion section of this chapter.

### **7.3.2. The Economic Condition of The Past**

From the recollection of using objects, visitors' memories are mixed with different feelings and various elements in the content of memories are discovered. For example, recollection sometimes brings back memories of the hardship in the old days in mixture with memories of happy times with family. In the case of the Bai-mi Clog Museum, many older visitors had memories of wearing clogs. The use of clogs not

only brings back their memories of family life but also reminded them of the economic conditions of their childhood.

The way we wore the clogs was not like now... In the past, we could only wear clogs in the evening, only in the evening after taking a bath, cleaning our feet and hands. In the daytime, we had to walk on bare foot..." (Interviewee B-1, Male/Age: 36-50).

As the production of plastic shoes has increased, clogs are no longer popular now. The role of clogs is also changed: from the practical purpose to providing aesthetic pleasure and entertainment. From B-1's recollection, only people from good families were able to afford clogs in the old days. Now, through the regeneration of the traditional craft by the Bai-mi Clog Museum, clogs become a piece of artwork and wearing clogs is for fun and to re-experience the earlier lifestyle.

### **7.3.3. The Relationship with Family**

As research points out, recollection is seldom independent from its context (Halbwachs 1980). Falk and Dierking also emphasise that memories and learning in the museum are situated in personal, physical and sociocultural contexts (Falk and Dierking 2000: 10). Many recollections in the museum, therefore are linked with friends or family members and the time spent with them. In the case of the Peitou Hot Springs Museum, P-3 found that the tatami, a Japanese mattress which is very normal in the household furniture in Japan, interested her most. Since she had had some tatami in her house, it brought back her memories of using it and more importantly, the relationship between her and her children. She said:

Because I had had tatami in my house, I had six at my home because they were very useful, particularly good for...for the touch and contact between parents and children. Though they were little then, my children still remember the tatami very much because we used to sleep, play games and tell stories on it. It was a very good way to contact and touch (Interviewee P-3, Female/Age: 36-50).

In recollection of how he used to wear clogs, B-4, indeed, remembered his dead father including how he used to live and the way he taught children.

It was my father's idea. He thought it was o.k. that we did not have much to eat but it was important to dress properly when we went out. My father was a miner and he earned relatively more money then. My father said he earned 120 dollars while other worker earned 20 dollars per day. Since it was a dangerous job, he tended to spend more money because he did not know when he would die. Of course, he took care of our family, too (Interviewee B-4, Male/Age: 36-50).

Visiting the museum and seeing objects they had used before, therefore, not only recalled the experience of using objects but also recalled their memories of the economic situation in the past and the relationship and time spent with their family members.

#### **7.3.4 The Collective Trauma of The Historical Tragedy**

The previous three patterns were found in the local history museums or the community museum. However when it comes to the holocaust museum, the correspondence between visitors and museum exhibits becomes more painful and intense. In the case of the Taipei 228 Memorial Museum, because of the nature of the museum, many visitors appeared very solemn when looking at exhibits. Apart from photography and newspaper cuttings, many objects exhibited had belonged to victims of the 228 Incident. During the process of collecting and exhibiting, ordinary objects had been re-contextualised and acquired a symbolic association with the dead. Here, the objects represent the absent - victims of the incident (Hallam and Hockey 2001:14). It is this symbolic power that touches, even overwhelms visitors. One respondent expressed that he even felt like crying when he saw the photography of an execution:

When they executed those people, their hands and feet were pierced by shackles.

I think it hurts a lot (...) I have read about it in documentary. Today, when I see the photography, maybe because I am a little bit older now, I can feel others' pain...I feel great pain (Interviewee T-2, Male/Age: 36-50).

One interviewee, who is a volunteer, told me about her observation of visitors' responses. She indicated:

Some came and burst into tears. Such as on Feb.28 when there were many visitors and there was a fund raising event. One visitor made a donation. The staff wanted to send him a book but he refused to take it because it would make him sad. I persuaded him to take it to send to neighbours or to give it to younger generations, so they can understand it. He was very reluctant to accept it because it reminded him of his relatives and made him sad (Interviewee T-3, Female/Age: 51-65).

In this case, for those who had experienced the tragedy or lost relatives in the incident, objects or photographs on display have a direct emotional, or even tormenting impact on them; for others who did not have first hand experience, the exhibits still provide powerful material evidence of a link with the historical tragedy. To be more specific, no matter whether visitors had or had not experienced the incident directly, the exhibits are charged with mixed emotions and they sometimes even evoke direct sensation in visitors such as the feeling of being hurt. Seeing, in this case, strangely involves and activates other senses. Roland Barthes elucidates this effect well in his discussion of photography. When Barthes watched a photograph titled "Nicaragua" taken by Wessing in 1979, in which a mother was weeping over her dead child covered under a piece of cloth, he felt an unspeakable feeling of anxiety. In his search for a term to articulate it, he found the Latin word 'punctum' to describe this particular correspondence. He explains: "It is this element which rises from the scene, shoots out of it like an arrow, and pierces me. A Latin word exists to designate this wound, this prick, this mark made by a pointed instrument" (Barthes 1981: 26). This 'punctum' effect, indeed, occurred to visitors in the Taipei 228 Memorial Museum. It

was the 'punctum' effect that struck T-2 when he looked at the scene in which people had chained hands.

In this particular case, visitors not only looked at exhibits but also felt pain transmitted from them. Objects owned and used by the victims here have the power to transmit grief and pain to visitors. When these particular objects which are related to and symbolise death are exhibited in the museum, their 'punctum' effect is further carried to wider society, thus constructing and becoming a collective trauma of the nation.

### **7.3.5. The Loss of Youth**

When the visitor is a family member of the victim, looking at objects or photographs used by his or her own dead relative recalls memories intertwined with complicated significances. The exhibits provide a direct link to his or her personal life. Among five interviews conducted in the 228 Memorial Museum, there is only one interviewee whose family members were victims of the 228 Incident. Therefore the data and pattern drawn here is based on an individual case, however it provides some insights to how family members recollect in the holocaust museum.

During my fieldwork, I saw a lady who stood in front of Mr. Wang's photographs and stared at the books and wrist watch used by Wang, Tei-Dong for a long period of time (See Plate 12). After chatting with her, I realised that she was the relative of Mr. Wang, the representative of the peoples' committee and the person who broadcast the decisions reached by the committee and government during the Incident. Without telling anybody, she came to the museum alone. Visiting the museum took her back to painful memories throughout her childhood and adulthood. She not only lost her uncle, Mr. Wang, but also her brother in the early 1960s. Following the 228 Incident, there was a long period of White Terror. Whoever said something against the government or talked about the 228 Incident might be questioned, sent to prison or, worst of all, executed secretly. Her own brother was executed during that White Terror period because he joined a study society. This incident changed her whole life and left her an

unforgettable trauma. She recalled:

At that time, our family was wealthy. My second brother was very able at school and worked in the post office. And because of that, my Dad felt very sad... After that, my Dad stopped sending us to school.. For me, I just got to the primary school. Not until recent years did I continue my junior high school education in the evening when it became compulsory. My father used to say: "No need to study, especially girls! Why study? Those who don't study are safe. And him, study and lose his life (Interviewee T-1, Female/Age: 36-50).

When she recalled these memories, she sometimes couldn't help weeping when we walked around the museum during the interview. Kavanagh has pointed the risk in dealing with traumatic experience in the museum. It is suggested that though there is an increasing emphasis on the therapeutic role of museums, they do not suit for those visitors who have just recently experienced trauma (Kavanagh 2002). In this case, the Incident happened when the respondent was little. However, having lacked institutional support and having suppressed the feelings for decades, she was not able to face and talk about her traumatic experience in public. Visiting the 228 Memorial Museum gave her comfort to see how justice has been done, and chatting and sharing her experience with the researcher to a certain extent also helped her to release the anxiety and disquiet which had been deeply repressed for a long time.

In her reminiscence, it is discovered that the museum exhibits, owned by her dead uncle, not only triggered her childhood memories but from these memories, it also made her think of the passage of time and loss of her youth. She said:

... it happened during our youth, which should be our golden age. It stopped my brothers and sisters doing many things. I felt...very frightened and dared not to talk to others, many things...Now we are too old to do many things (Interviewee T-1, Female/Age: 51-65).

Because of the history that exhibits represent, they recalled visitors' childhood memories, invited them to review the past, and caused the reflection on the passage of time.

## **7.4 Conclusion**

As Kavanagh indicates the museum is a meeting ground for "formal and informal versions of the past called histories, offered through exhibitions, and the individual or collective account of reflective personal experience called memories" (Kavanagh 1996: 1). This chapter explores memories- the history constructed by individuals in the museum. There are some characteristics of memories recalled in the museum. From the study, it is found that recollection is not purely of past memories but a mixture with the past and present. It is also found that the material culture in the museum plays an important role in visitors' recollection. Applying Saussure's theory of semiotics, the object can be regarded as a signifier- a material symbol that implies or indicates some significance beyond its material existence (Saussure 1960). The meanings of objects - the signified, could be historically or socially coded, however in the present research, it is the visitors who have crafted the personal significance of objects throughout their visits. Museum architecture and exhibits are therefore material symbols that trigger and lead visitors' recollections.

Comparing memories triggered by the museum architecture and by exhibits, there is one major difference. The recollections through exhibits tend to be more general- memories about daily life - while the museum architecture recalls more often a specific event or a particular life episode. Apart from this major difference, four characteristics of memories recalled in the museum emerged. First, they are involved with visitors' lives in the past; some remember time spent with their families and some others remember household life in the past. Secondly, since the museum is mostly about the past, while recollecting, visitors also make a comparison of the material culture in the past with that in the present. In most cases, visitors seemed to

show a rather positive attitude to the things in the past- nostalgia in Lowenthal's term. However, it is worth noticing that visitors are not naïve nor simply accept everything in the past; they are, on the contrary, able to explain and give good reasons of their viewpoints. Though modern society is usually considered to be more advanced in material achievement, respondents constantly reflect and question the modern way of life through comparison with the architecture and artefacts produced in the past.

Moreover, memories are not passively received in the museum; they are actively recollected and constructed. For example, in the case of the 228 Memorial Museum, visitors are able to reconstruct historical events. Lastly, memories in the museum on the one hand have the therapeutic power to make people feel, release suppressed feelings and help them to be healed during this process. On the other hand, they sometimes, especially in the case of the holocaust museum, make people feel hurt and evoke sympathy towards the historical event. Therefore, visits to the museum could be very emotionally laden experiences since they trigger visitors' memories of earlier days, open the dialogue between the past and the present, and invite visitors express memories that, although suppressed, remain unforgettable. Through recollection and reminiscence, visitors are able to reflect upon their current situation and constitute their self-identity.



**Plate 11: The Old Bathtub And Toilet Exhibited in The I-Lan Museum of Local Political History**



**Plate 12: The Wrist Watch Used by Wang, Tei-Dong**

# **Chapter 8 Connection: Perceptions of Time and Space in the Museum**

## **Introduction**

Visitors come to the museum and encounter objects produced and used by people in the past and exhibited in the museum context. Local residents visit the museum not only for entertainment but also to understand what happened in the past in their locality. It is a tour that separates them from their daily life space and takes them back in time in which the personal life experience is interwoven with the museum visit. The data analysis reveals that visitors' museum experiences are both cognitive and affective. In previous chapters, respondents' activities of learning and recollection have been discussed and analysed. Through this process, they experience confirmation and recollection, which helps them to connect the past with the present, and build a sense of place. In this chapter the visitors' time and space experiences in local museums will be examined to investigate how the museum helps them build a sense of place and influences their cultural identities.

### **8.1 The Loss of Place and History in Contemporary Taiwan**

To discuss how local residents construct their cultural identities in the museum context, first it is necessary to review briefly the social and cultural background of contemporary Taiwan.

After five decades of economy-led development, the environment of Taiwan has been devastated by polluting industries and an ugly urban landscape due to over-development and over-population. Traditional buildings along with traditional ways of life are disappearing rapidly. Instead, an ideology of progress, bringing with it a fast growth of modern buildings, has become the dominant mode of the Taiwanese lifestyle. In the process of modernisation, scholars and practitioners imported from developed countries the theory and practice of modernist architecture and urban

planning and applied these in Taiwan. However, as Hsai indicates, the imported ideas and theories do not always correspond to the local culture and experience (Hsia 1993: 212). The landscape in Taiwan resembles many other developing countries, which lose and destroy their traditional architectures in the rapid process of modernisation. This flatness of modernist culture, as Relph indicates, encourages a sense of placelessness. He explains: "Placelessness describes both an environment without significant places and the underlying attitude which does not acknowledge significance in places" (Relph 1976: 143). In addition, to enhance the validity of its regime, the former KMT government suppressed Taiwanese studies and thus, people in Taiwan know very little about history and culture in their own localities. Without the memory of their own history, people in Taiwan in fact suffer amnesia. What is more, in past decades, Taiwan has absorbed American and Japanese cultures mainly through the press and media. Influenced by Japanese and American culture along with the process of internationalisation, elements of various cultures are juxtaposed and co-exist in Taiwan. Some scholars point out under this particular context that Taiwan has presented a post-modern culture. For example, Yang thinks that many Taiwanese artists have absorbed the artistic concepts of major modern art movements of the twentieth century such as the Impressionism, Futurism, and Surrealism, however under the Taiwanese context, many contemporary artists' artworks combine and transform various elements and present a rather post-modern spirit (Yang 1995: 216). Similarly, Lee analyses the architectures and believes that the landscape of Taiwan presents a post-modern phenomenon - a culture of collages and hybridity (Lee 1999).

At the turn of the twentieth century, several issues in the area of urban planning are therefore emerging in Taiwanese society, including uneven development and regional polarisation, and the replacement of the space of places by space of flows (Hsia 1993: 292). Political suppression, an educational system which ignores the history and culture of Taiwan, and uneven development have obliterated people's sense of belonging to a locality. Faced with a deteriorated environment and a loss of historical memories, people in Taiwan have gradually experienced a sense of placelessness. In addition, like most developed countries, Taiwan has also entered into the era of

post-modernity, and the development of the economy and of technology also endows people with the great opportunity to travel abroad and to explore the Internet world. In these conditions more and more people are thus encountering a new experience: a floating in space and a fragmentation of identity.

However, as information technology develops, there is a resistance to the homogenous culture brought about by the process of globalisation. Following the process of democratisation in the past decade, people in Taiwan are more eager than before to construct meanings based on the place and locality where they live, since a sense of belonging to a place constructs an essential part of cultural identity. The community empowerment project launched by the central government has the same aim. Castells analyses the social condition of the information society and thinks that following the process of globalisation, more and more people start to organise societies and communities to combat this trend by searching for and constructing their own culture. He explains: "People have affirmed their cultural identity, often in territorial terms, mobilizing to achieve their demands, organizing their communities, and staking out their places to preserve meaning, to restore whatever limited control they can over work and residence, to reinvent love" (Castells 1989: 350). It is also as part of this movement of search for local culture that the local museums in Taiwan have developed in the past decade. In the following sections, how visitors affirm and construct their cultural identities in terms of space and time in the museum context will be explored.

## **8.2 The Museum Experience**

The museum is a site that visitors encounter the past within a different space. It is not only the exhibits that craft visitors' experience but the museum itself also constructs a historical site that turns visitors away from their daily life activities. Visiting museums is a tour into a different space and time in which visitors can contemplate, recollect and acquire new information. It is a process, a tour that visitors can travel back and forth from the past to the present. How visitors construct their cultural identities

through different dimension of time and space in their museum experience will be explored in this chapter.

In this section, how visitors construct a sense of place through their museum experience will be explored. The theories of post-modernism and human geography in relation to space and place will be introduced.

### **8.2.1 Concepts of Space and Place**

The process of globalisation has aroused concern among more and more scholars about how the process of globalisation influences people's perception in terms of space and time. As Hall points out: "All identities are located in symbolic space and time"(Hall 1992: 301). People's experiences are constantly subject to their perceptions of time and space since 'space and time are the fundamental, material dimensions of human life'(Castells 1996: 376). To understand how visitors construct their cultural identity in the museum, theories about concepts of time and space in postmodern society are revealing in further discussion. In this section, the concepts of post-modernist space will be discussed first.

Castells argues that space is not the mere reflection of human activity but itself is the expression of the society, and constantly constructs people's perception and experience (Castells 1997b). He points out that the concept of space is greatly transformed in the postmodern information society. He indicates that the advance of information technology has produced a new spatial form- the space of flows (1997). The space of flows, defined by Castells, is constituted by three layers: electronic impulses, nodes and hubs, and spatial organization of the dominant, managerial elites"(1996: 412-5). It dissolves the traditional sense of place and time by "disordering the sequence of events and making them simultaneous" (1996: 467). Similarly, Harvey describes this new experience as time-space compression since people can move back and forth in different places much faster than before, switch spaces constantly, and receive and retrieve various information around the world in one instance. The traditional structure of time and space is gradually disappearing and

the relationship between time and space is compressed (Harvey 1990). In general, it is believed that in the postmodern society, people are no longer attached to a fix place but constantly move and switch between difference spaces.

In these circumstances, the perception of space is transformed, and one of the most significant phenomena is the separation of space from place. In the past, the idea of space usually referred to a place where one lives. However, as modernity progresses, the perception of place is dramatically changed. People don't simply live and spend most of their time in one place or in a town where they are born. In general, people experience various spatiality and visit different places. To describe this experience, Giddens distinguishes the concept of space from place. He defines place as a concrete site in which people's identities are bounded, while space can traverse the physical dimension. Hall illustrates Harvey's idea: "Places remain fixed; they are where we have roots. Yet space can be 'crossed' in the twinkling of an eye - by jet, fax or satellite" (1992: 205). As people increasingly engage with and travel into various spaces, the sense of place is gradually suppressed by the virtual space produced by information technology. As a consequence, the social meanings evaporate from places (Castells 1989: 349). The uprooting of meanings from the place where people live has caused the crisis of the loss of cultural identity because people have often affirmed their cultural identity in territorial terms (Castells 1989: 350). On the one hand, Hall deconstructs the idea of fixed cultural identity and points out that people's cultural identity is a process of becoming and is therefore constantly transformed with the passage of time. On the other hand, the construction of cultural identities is very frequently projected and imagined in a spatial metaphor. How the development of local museums provides visitors with the experience of different time and space in the information society and how they contribute to the formation of cultural identity will be elaborated in this chapter. The space and time in the museum provide important references to understanding this issue. In the next section, the nature of museum space will be explored first.

### **8.2.2 The Museum Space**

In the context of post-modern theory, the local history and community museum is indeed a constructed site that reverses the post-modern space-time compressed experience. It intends to fix the flow of space, and invites people to stroll through the leisurely flow of time. To explain the spatiality of the museum, Foucault, Bennett and Duncan's analyses are helpful. Foucault's discourses on the formation of modern spaces help to illustrate the concept of museum space. He reveals that there are many spaces that are different from the modernised secular space. He calls these spaces 'heterogeneous spaces' such is a space " which draws us out of ourselves, in which the erosion of ourselves, our time and our history occurs, the space that claws at us..."(Foucault 1986: 23). Through a semi- ritualised process of entering into a heterogeneous place, people are led into a detour which is separated from secular time and space. In these heterogeneous spaces, people's perceptions of time are different from the progressive and linear modernist concept of time. These spaces are either deviant or sanctified. The former are places such as hospitals, prisons, and cemeteries where illness and death take place. These are crisis places, as Foucault defines, that are marginalised from the secular world. The latter are located in institutions such as churches and museums. The museum, in his discourse, also constitutes a heterogeneous space, heterotopias, which links to slices in time. "Museums and libraries have become heterotopias in which time never stops building up and topping its own summit..." (1986: 26). The particular space of the museum is closely related to its time. He maintains that modern museums and libraries are founded and based on the idea of "accumulating everything, of establishing a sort of general archive, the will to enclose in one place all times, all epochs, all forms, all tastes, the idea of constituting a place of all times that is itself outside of time and inaccessible to its ravages..." (1986: 26).

As indicated, Foucault's main concern with space is its practice of power in relation to the formation of modern society (Su 2000). Though Foucault does not analyse the

power relationship of the museum space, to him space is never neutral and is mediated by power relationships, which influence and construct people's behaviours (Foucault 1972; Su 2000). Drawing upon Foucault's theory, Bennett analyses the formation of museum and points out that it is closely related with the "exercise of new forms of power" and aims to improve man's behaviours through its space (Bennett 1995). Bennett's Foucaultian analysis provides insights into understanding the museum as a site set up by the nation to discipline its citizens. The limitation of Bennett's account, as Witcomb argues, is that museum visitors are understood only as citizens and "the museum space is seen as oriented exclusively towards the construction of a national (or imperial) community" (Witcomb 2003: 17). She argues that museum can relate to a variety of communities and visitors have different ways of making use of museums such as employing it as a space for pleasure or a space for cross cultural communication. Also Duncan in her research explores the role of the art museum and points out that museums are a setting for rituals. She explains: " Like most ritual space, museum space is carefully marked off and culturally designated as reserved for a special quality of attention – in this case, for contemplation and learning" (Duncan 1995: 10).

In general, the museum provides a marked-off space, a demarcated space which permits visitors to learn, relax or contemplate in various layers of time. As mentioned, the five museums researched are situated in renovated historical buildings. Before entering the museums, visitors pass through either a garden such as in the case of the I-Lan Museum of Local Political History or a square as in the case of the Taipei 228 Memorial Museum and the Hsinchu Municipal Glass Museum. Passing through these transitory spaces, visitors enter into a historical space which is separated from the secular world. Apart from the transitory space and the museum architecture, which mark off the museum space from the outside world, the exhibition inside the museum also constructs a special space-object relationship - a space of representation (Bennett 1995: 24; Lebbruck 2001). The arrangement of space-object relationship is often aimed at constructing a narrative- a story unfolding in the passage of time. The story that the museum presents usually follows a chronological order but visitors are free to

explore the museum narrative at their own pace. Therefore, the museum space is also a dream space that visitors associate with their own experiences and memories (Kavanagh 2000). How the five museums in this research construct their narratives in museum space will be discussed later in this chapter.

### **8.2.3 The Flow of Time in the Museum**

After reviewing post-modern theories of the space and exploring Foucault and Duncan's concepts of museum space, this section is going to discuss the flow of time in the museum. Urry's essay provides an innovative insight in understanding the concept of time in post-modern society. He explains that people's perceptions of time have been changing according to different modes of capitalism. He points out that in the modern society, which is developed and regulated under organised capitalism, clock-time is dominant, in which time is regarded as a resource and can be exchanged for money. With the development of information technology, he proposes that two concepts of time, glacial time and instantaneous time, are emerging. The former refers to "an immensely long, imperceptibly changing, evolutionary or glacial time" in which all humankind is brought together and builds a sense of belonging to a community by facing global problems together, such as environmental issues. The latter is the experience that people have particularly in an age of mass communication, which brings and juxtaposes events and news of different places together in one instant. He thinks that instantaneous time dissolves a stable and institutionalised future (Urry 1994).

Though Urry's concept of two modes of time is innovative, clock-time is still the dominant experience that most people experience in the contemporary world. Time is still calculated as a resource for profit and most people organise their lives according to clock – time; the sensation of glacial time and instantaneous time only occur occasionally in special situations such as in the museum, fun fair and Internet world. The perception of time and space in the museum is distinguished from the experience of work-time perception in daily life. It first fixes the contemporary moment of time when visitors enter into the space, and then the clock usually turns back to the past.

Sometimes it turns back to an ancient time as in many archaeological museums, or it takes visitors to certain significant years such as the year 1939 when the Second World War broke out. As a consequence, visitors feel connected with the events and people in the past. For example, it is found that in the Taipei 228 Memorial Museum visitors connect their personal experiences with the historical event. It in a way expands the sensations of the present to the past; visitors' perception of time is no longer bounded by the contemporary moment. In other words, the museum invites visitors to break with the instant moment and extends their time perception into the past, sometimes even to the infinitely ancient past such as many archaeological and science museums do. Visiting the museum, visitors are able to connect personal temporary and mortal time to a greater historical framework, as illustrated in the previous chapter, and a sense of glacial time emerges. It is argued through a sense of glacial time, people tend to feel a sense of belonging to a greater community (Urry 1994).

To exemplify time in the museum, I would like to return to Foucault's metaphor. Foucault thinks that the museum is a place where multiple layers of time exist in one space. He indicates that the museum accumulates various times which are expressed and exhibited through objects and material culture. Some museum exhibits are displayed in a linear progressive narrative while others juxtapose different time periods, and visitors are free to wander their own route and at their own pace. No matter whether the narration is constructed and exhibited in a linear or simultaneous time, very often visitors are invited to walk into the past. Through the space-object relationship arranged by the museum, the museum intends to recreate the past in its space. That is to say, the time experience of the past is artificially reconstructed and man-made since no past can ever be relived. The flow of time in the museum is therefore cut off from the outside world or to be more specific, the past coexists with the contemporary in another space created by the museum. Though, the museum space can enclose visitors completely and physically separate them from the outside world, the sense of time is beyond the physical boundary of the museum wall.

To summarise, museum time is different from the common work-time that we have in daily life; it is multi-layered and connects visitors to a grander time frame. That is to say, visitors might experience time of many different periods in the museum. From narrations presented by the museum visitors not only connect to the past but are also able to juxtapose experiences of different times in connection with the present. Compared with the grand history, it gives visitors a sense of glacial time in which human's life is only transitory and short on the one hand. On the other hand, it also helps visitors build a sense of belonging to a greater community by connecting with the past, searching the meaning of the present and reflecting upon it. In general, participants have encountered the experience of different time in the museum and undergone a dialogue of the present with the past. They believe that history provides valuable experience. L-4 expressed his views of history and concepts of time in the museum:

I think this is living history. We can't live in history, or live in the historical past. History is happening everyday. Thus if you preserve it in every county, you can reflect and teach the people about the development of the county. I think the preservation and proper reuse of historical buildings with local spirit can teach people what we have been through (Interviewee L-4, Male/36-50).

L-4 expresses a linear progressive concept of time. Time flows from the past to the present. For him, visiting the local history museum is like reliving history again, though in reality, he knows it is not possible to do so. From the data analysis in the previous chapter, it shows that visitors' museum experience is constantly moving back and forth between the past and the present. Reflecting his personal experience, L-5's narrative shows that he recollects in the museum different periods of his life:

People of my age, now, I am sixty something. I saw the 228 Incident when I was little, at the age of 8-9 years. At that time, I couldn't understand. Later on my parents and older family members told me about it. Everyone was so afraid at that time. I did not understand then. Later I understood it, and it was really too

much. They killed anyone without any trial (Interviewee L-5, Male/Age: 51-65).

Therefore, there are indeed many layers or different periods of time presented by the museum; visitors are free to recollect and immerse themselves in different periods of time. Or like L-5, when visitors recollect, the time experience might move forth and back as their memories flow. From the experience of different layers of time, visitors are able to further reflect on the present. The interview data also reveals when visitors recollect in the museum, showing that they also make comparisons of the material culture and social political systems of the past with those of the present.

### **8.3 History Interpreted and Constructed**

After an exploration of museum time and space in the context of postmodernist discourses, this chapter is going to investigate the history constructed in the five museums researched and visitors' historical views in relation to their cultural identities. As Hall points out, cultural identity is constantly transformed, subject to the social and political condition. One of the important sources for the construction of cultural identity is history; personal identity is in a constant dialogue with history. Knell explains: "History is critical to nationhood. Collections, as entities which cross time, are not simply products of that history, they also symbolize it. They contribute to identity" (Knell 2002: 343). Larrain also points out that the personal identity depends on memory and the "continuity of consciousness over time was crucial in the constitution of the subject" (Larrain 1994: 144). In addition to records of oral history and memories passed on by the older to the younger generations, local community and history museums provide a meeting place of the past and the present, a collection of the memories and recollection across different generations.

In Chapter Six, the participants' learning process and outcomes have been investigated. Visitors have undergone a process of dialogue between their prior knowledge and the historical accounts presented in the museum. Transformation

learning theory is applied to understanding how visitors might change their views after they visit museums and encounter different narratives of history. In Chapter Seven, how visitors recollect in the museum is explored and different patterns of recollections have been discussed. In general, we find that visitors intertwine their personal experiences with the historical accounts presented by the museum. Recollections and memories therefore play an important part in their museum experience. Nevertheless, each museum has its own message and narrative of history to convey, according to its nature and collection. In the previous two chapters, the analyses are based on cross case studies, and how participants in each museum interpret history is not individually analysed. In this section, discussion will focus on how participants interpret history in each type of museums. By so doing, it is hoped to compare visitors' interpretations of history in each museum and draw a picture of how visitors construct their cultural identities in different museum contexts.

### **8.3.1 History in the Art and Craft Museums**

Of the five museums researched, the Hsinchu Municipal Glass Museum and the Bai-mi Clog Museum are art and craft museums. As discussed in Chapter Six, it is aesthetic pleasure that most visitors experience in art museums. Though history does not play a central role in these two museums, both museums emphasise the development of art and craft of the locality through the exhibitions. In the Hsinchu Municipal Glass Museum, apart from a small showroom exhibiting photographs of the renovation process of the historical building, there is one permanent exhibition room displaying the works of glass art made by local artists in Hsinchu, and another exhibition room displaying the development of glass around the world in juxtaposition with that in Taiwan. According to the interview data, the museum staff thinks it is important to promote local art and introduce visitors to the development of glass art in Hsinchu. It is, in fact, one of the characteristics of the recent development of local museums in Taiwan to preserve and promote local culture. It is hoped that by the establishment of museums, local pride may be built up.

Many local residents in Hsinchu, especially the older generation, are quite familiar

with Hsinchu's glass export industry in the past, but few think the native glass work might be exhibited as works of art in the museum. From the interview data, it also shows visitors are more impressed with glass work made by international artists than native ones. However, it needs to be pointed out when native glass artwork is exhibited in the permanent exhibition room, it changes local residents' views toward their tradition. G-2 expressed:

Several years ago, we people in Hsinchu exported a large amount of animals made of glass. Our history taught us about this. They were very popular in Hsinchu and most of them were exported... The local artists also made some big animals such as pigs, tigers and other animals. But now as you see in the exhibition they are no longer limited to the small animals (Interviewee G-2, Female/Age: 36-50).

Through visiting the museum, G-2 has identified the difference between the glass work made in the past and that in the present. She notices there is more variety of glass artwork than before. Comparing Hsinchu's native artists' works with international artist's works, while their expression and techniques are not so artistic, nevertheless, they represent the local craft of Hsinchu and remind visitors of the past and present local glass industry. To a certain extent it invites visitors to rethink their local history.

In the Bai-mi Clog Museum there is only a very brief introduction about the development of clogs in the Bai-mi community. As mentioned in Chapter Four, the exhibition in the museum is rather unconventional. There are no exhibition labels, and most clogs displayed are made by community residents. Visitors are welcome to try them on, and many clogs exhibited are for sale. Though with only a few panels, the message that the museum has been established by and for the community is strong since all of the museum staff or volunteers are from the Bai-mi community. Though not a resident in the Bai-mi community, B-5 could identify that the themes of the museum are not only about the clogs but also the community, because of the

management and atmosphere of the museum. If the interviewees are community residents, they are more than eager to share with the researcher the history and development of their community. Very often, it is the development of the community rather than the museum exhibition that they are most concerned about. When asked his motivation for being a volunteer in the museum, B-4 told me about the development of the community and the foundation of the museum instead. He said:

There were three or four communities in this area before. After a period of time, three communities were combined as a Bai-mi community. They were combined because of the environmental issue. But after some time, they were divided again...The community residents thought to strengthen the community and found the tradition of clog making in the 1940's. In the past, it was a very profitable and honourable business. It happened that our government was launching Community Empowerment Project. Therefore, we started to promote it (Interviewee B-4, Mal/Age: 36-50).

This shows that it is the community that he is concerned about and he believes that by the establishment of the clog museum, it helps to regenerate and improve the environment of the Bai-mi community. He is not the only interviewee who was eager to share his or her experience with the researcher and talk about the history of the Bai-mi community.

In both cases, the Hsinchu Municipal Glass Museum and the Bai-mi Clog Museum, it is from their understanding of traditional craft that local residents start to discover local history and culture. Though it is not possible for the art museum to present local history in detail, the traditional art and craft acts as a starting point that inspires them to search out more about the history and culture of the local community.

### **8.3.2. History in The History Museums**

The presentation and interpretation of history is obviously not the main purpose of the art and craft museum. However, for history museums such as the Peitou Hot Springs

Museum, the I-Lan Museum of Local Political History and the Taipei 228 Memorial Museum, history plays a central part in the museum exhibition.

The Peitou Hot Springs Museum is a medium sized museum. The process of its foundation is closely bound up in the local community. Therefore at the beginning of the construction, the design teams worked with the local community and decided it was to be a museum of local history. Therefore, using the history and development of the spa as the main theme, the museum at the same time presents the past of the Peitou area. Visitors can find how Peitou spa was first discovered by a Japanese person, and later developed as a spa resort for wealthy Japanese people and the colonial military. After the retreat of the Japanese colonial army, the spa industry remained. Though faced with a period of decline, the Peitou area has continued to be a famous spa resort. Tourists from Japan as well as from other parts of Taiwan came to Peitou for the spa and for entertainment. To represent and document the past development of Peitou, the narrative that the museum presents basically follows a chorological order as it documents the prosperity and decline of the Peitou area. The history presented by the museum shows different groups of people have lived in the area and influenced the development of the Peitou area. For example, from the exhibition, it tells that Peitou was first inhabited by indigenous people and later developed by Japanese people as a spa resort. The first public spa in Taiwan was built here. It also shows many other natural resources and crafts of the Peitou area. For example, a stone containing radioactive material was first found by a Japanese scholar in Peitou River and named after its locality as Peitou Stone. Throughout the museum exhibition, it demonstrates many local past achievements and rich natural resources of Peitou. Though Peitou is also known as a red light district, and many spa hotels also introduced special services for their customers, this past is presented in an interesting way, such as the first certificate of a legal prostitute and the means of transport that prostitutes used in the past, with little moral judgment.

From the rich accounts of local history, visitors are more likely to have a broader view of local history than those in the art museum. This history that museum presents to a

certain extent influences visitors' historical points of views. For example, P-1 expresses his historical viewpoint:

If we talk about native Taiwanese culture, I feel it should include all cultures that have been in contact with Taiwan such as Han Chinese culture including the Hakka people, or Minnan people's cultures. They are all fine but we should also include indigenous people's culture and the heritage left by Japanese colonialism. I think they should all be included. Though colonialism is from outside, so what? It has become history (Interviewee P-1, Male/Age: 20-35).

Because the museum presents a rather sophisticated local history of the Peitou area, and shows the process of cultivation of the Peitou area by different groups, including Japanese people, visitors tend to accept the multi-cultural history that Peitou shows in the museum. The disgraceful past is presented in a neutral way and the glorious parts of Peitou history is emphasised. By displaying the first spa in Taiwan and the discovery of the only stone named in Taiwan, the museum also intends to build up local pride. Though each participant has a rather individual account and memory of the historical building and exhibits as discussed in previous chapters, through visiting the museum, they come to understand more about local history and culture. It is also from an understanding of a common past that the local residents build a sense of place and belonging to the same community.

The I-Lan Museum of Local Political History intends to present the political history of I-Lan. Unlike the Peitou Hot Springs Museum, the history presented in the I-Lan museum is official history. Though smaller than the Peitou Hot Springs Museum in size, it intends to cover the whole history of political development of I-Lan County. As described in Chapter Four, it presents a precise political history of I-Lan and it gives very positive affirmation of the political performance of all the governors and mayors in the past, including Japanese governors. It also shows the process of the development of I-Lan by illustrating its changes of territory and political systems in the past two hundred years. Here, it is the glorious past of I-Lan that the museum

intends to present rather the holistic picture of the development of I-Lan. All interviewees easily identified the main theme of the museum. L-2 said:

From the moment I enter the museum, I feel it is about the whole development of I-Lan. I can understand the development and politics of I-Lan. It is obvious. It is a local political history museum. That's it (Interviewee L-2, Female/Age: 20-35).

From the interview data, it is proved that the museum has successfully conveyed a simple but strong message - it is a museum about I-Lan. Similar to the Peitou Hot Springs Museum, the Japanese colonial past plays an important role here. The museum building is a traditional Japanese house. By preserving the Japanese heritage, visitors also tend to accept the colonial past. Three participants have shown their positive attitudes towards the Japanese colonial past and think it is part of I-Lan history. L-5 expressed his view: "In fact, we don't need to hate the Japanese so much. It is history" (Interviewee L5, Male/Age: 51-65).

From these two museums, the history that visitors encounter is not limited only to that part of local history which is related to traditional crafts. Though the main purpose is to build local pride by representation of the historical past, the culture of different ethnic groups and their achievements are also recounted. Visitors not only craft a sense of locality but also identify various elements and ethnic groups that have influenced the development of locality. The sense of locality is therefore constructed in a historical context.

However, when the history presented in the museum is the repressed and traumatic past of Taiwan, there are a lot of confrontations and conflicts played out in the Taipei 228 Memorial Museum. As introduced in Chapter Four, the 228 Memorial Museum is not only dealing with the 228 Incident in 1947 but also presents a concise social and political history of Taiwan from 1895 to the 1980s. Unlike the colonial past, which is more remote to most Taiwanese people, many people of the older generation still have

vivid memories of the 228 Incident. Unlike the I-Lan Museum of Local Political History and the Peitou Hot Springs Museum, the history exhibited in the 228 Memorial Museum is not a peaceful past. It is a past that is full of unrest and torment. For the older generation, it is a historical past that is full of pain; for the younger generation, it is a history lesson that contradicts what they have learned in the schools. When analysing how participants view history in the museum, it is found that it is the history of Taiwan rather than the history of the locality that they think about.

It belongs to all Taiwanese because it presents history and explains how it happened. How to put it - we should say we need to understand history and avoid the tragedy happening again. It could never happen again. We still need to let the younger generation understand it (Interviewee T-3, Female/ Age: 51-65).

T-3 has expressed the two most frequent messages that most visitors think are most important from their visit. They are to learn the lesson of history to avoid such a tragedy and to pass historical facts to the younger generations. To pursue the historical facts is also frequently emphasised by participants. For many decades, this period of history has been suppressed and remained a taboo. Though after the lifting of martial law, the 228 Incident was no longer taboo and more scholars have conducted research into understanding the causes, the process and effects of this incident, the general public still considers it a permanent wound, a taboo that they don't know how to deal with. Therefore, the establishment of the museum provides a public forum for the general public to learn about this historical past. The chronological narration and rich material of newspaper cuttings and photographs aim to reconstruct the incident in its social and political context. The presentation in the museum makes it much easier for the general public to understand the past than by reading an archive. Therefore the museum has become one of the best channels for the public to understand this complicated history. For example, T-4 expressed the view strongly that the museum is where real history is presented. She explains her motivation of being a volunteer in the museum:

Because I am a history teacher, I have taught history for my whole life - for more than twenty years, but all I taught was Chinese history. I didn't say anything about our history. Taiwanese history was in a pure blank. It was seldom mentioned in the textbook. The Chinese history I taught, especially the modern history, was full of lies. When I taught, I felt uneasy about it; I could not persuade myself that it was correct. Later I thought that Taiwanese history, especially this period, was the eternal trauma of Taiwanese people, which related to the issue of harmony between ethnic groups (Interviewee T-4, Female/Age: 51-65).

She believes the history that the museum presents is far more reliable than the history book from which she learned and from which she taught in the high school. Rosenzweig and Thelen's research in how American people understand the past indicates that most people rank the history museum as one of the most reliable resources for understanding the past, and one of the reasons for this is because the history museum displays authentic objects (Rosenzweig and Thelen 1998). In the case of the 228 Memorial Museum, it is particularly true. Since it is not easy for the general public to get access to historical documents and the history of the 228 Incident was censored from the national curriculum, the establishment of the museum has become a significant move. Different from the school education, the museum becomes an alternative source, a place that people can get the information from. As a voluntary tour guide, T-4 thinks the museum is a living classroom through which she can finally teach the 'real' history and pass historical lessons on to the younger generation.

Since the 228 Incident affects the entire country and is well known throughout the population, many visitors either witnessed or heard about the incident, and some are even family members of victims, visitors' experiences are rather complicated. The message that the museum communicates with its visitors is not as straightforward as others, such as being proud as a community resident or identifying with the achievements of the locality. As discussed in Chapter Six, when confronted with a

traumatic historical past, various responses occur in the museum such as shock, anger and grief, and along with these strong responses, participants undergo a dialogue with the history presented in the museum. In summary, it is the common traumatic past that visitors experience together in the museum. Though visitors may not join the tour guide or visit the museum in a group, the history presented and reconstructed in the museum has created collective traumatic memories for visitors. Through the understanding of the past, a sadness of being Taiwanese grows and the feeling of a common fate emerges. Therefore, the meaning of history has particular significance for visitors in the 228 Memorial Museum. As mentioned, the 228 Incident is considered to be one of the reasons for the rise of Taiwanese consciousness and it has had a strong impact on people's thinking about their cultural identity. In other words, through thinking about the most traumatic event in their past, visitors tend to also reflect upon their cultural identity. T-2 points out that understanding history is the essential part of one's identity:

I feel that a person, a county and a society as well - a person could not live without history. People talk about where they came from, in fact, that is why I study Taiwanese history. As for my own case, if I don't know about where am I from or things about Taiwan, I feel uneasy. It is even as if one had no identity of one's own. If a person does not have an identity, she or he does not know how to deal with things around ... (Interviewee T-2, Male/Age: 36-50).

As a consequence, the museum of national history becomes an important site for visitors to deal with the national past, negotiate their personal and collective memories and construct their cultural identities in a historical context.

In conclusion, the meanings of history encountered and constructed by visitors differ in different types of museum. It is illustrated in the following table:

The Museum	History Presented	Outcome & Experience
The Bai-Mi Clog Museum	Clog Industry History of The Community	
The Hsinchu Municipal Glass Museum	Local Glass Industry Art History of Glass	Local Pride Sense of Belonging
The Peitou Hot Springs Museum	Hot Spring Industry Local History	
The I-Lan Museum of Local Political History	Local Political History	
The Taipei 228 Memorial Museum	The 228 Incident History of Taiwan, 1895-1980's	Common Fate Nationalism

Table 11: History Presented in Different Types of Museums

It is widely believed that people appropriate history and interpret it for the purpose of the present or as a model for action (Buckley 1996; Kavanagh 1990; Merriman 1991). Gruffudd further claims: "Historical narrative reveals contemporary anxieties, and contemporary desires are fulfilled in the preservation of the past: The national past is above all a modern past ..." (Gruffudd 1995: 50). The rapid development of local museums in Taiwan indeed reflects the needs of society. The local government has established local museums to promote love and identity of locality, while visitors come to museums for entertainment, learning and recollection. Though participants' motivations quite often differ from the expectations of the local government and museum curators, they show a very positive attitude towards the renovation of historical buildings as museums and tend to build a sense of belonging from their museum experiences. This table summarises and shows that the history visitors learn

in the local and community museum is more about the industry and history of the locality; thus they tend to build a sense of belonging to the place they live in and love of their locality. What visitors in the Taipei 228 Memorial Museum encounter is the major Taiwanese historical tragedy in the context of the political history of the country. These traumatic experiences have brought visitors to recollect and reflect on their own experiences and, further, build a sense of a common fate and inspire Taiwanese nationalism.

## **8.4 Cultural Identity in Construction**

After summarising the history constructed and interpreted in the museum, I would like to investigate how the museum experience affects people's cultural identities. Reflecting patterns that have emerged from the data and analysis in previous chapters, this chapter will focus on how people perceive and construct their cultural identities in terms of space and time.

### **8.4.1 From the Space to Locality**

From the interview data we see that history and locality are the two main references for the construction of cultural identity. Participants sometimes applied territorial terms to explain their concepts of culture. For example, L-4 explains his identity in territorial terms:

Taiwan is a part of the world. We start from local study and gradually broaden our view. For example, I study I-Lan; I start from something that is familiar to me in my local area. Gradually I extend my view to study Taiwan and broaden my view and consider Taiwan as a part of the world. They are all related (Interviewee L-4, Male/Age: 36-50).

For L-4 it is from the locality that he constructs his cultural identity. Though using the locality as the starting point, L-4's cultural identity is not limited to the locality. It is from the locality that he connects himself with a wider world, and from this constant

comparison and extension he constructs his cultural identity. Similarly, P-1 explains his idea of Taiwanese culture from both its geographical and historical perspectives.

I think the location of Taiwan is very interesting. It has the influence of Han-Chinese people, indigenous people and Japanese colonialism...It happens to include these rich and diverse historical backgrounds. Particularly to this location, Europeans such as the Spanish and the Dutch came to Taiwan. The French army did not occupy Taiwan but attacked and bombed it once. Thus, I feel that Taiwan has a very special time-space context (Interviewee P-1, Male/Age: 20-35).

The interview data shows that L-4 searches for his cultural identity from the understanding of locality in connection with the broader world, while P-1 reflects upon the meanings of Taiwanese culture in its historical context. In summary, the interview data shows that visitors quite often reflect on their concept of Taiwanese culture in reference to the framework of time and space.

Since the rapid expansion of urbanisation and industrialisation have greatly transformed the traditional landscape of Taiwan, the reconstruction of place-based social meaning is particularly important in contemporary Taiwanese society. How is place-based social meaning reconstructed by cultural means? I would like to turn to Castell's theory again. Castells points out the importance of symbols as the material evidence for identity: "The symbolic marking of places, the preservation of symbols of recognition, the expression of collective memory in actual practices of communication, are fundamental means by which places may continue to exist as such, without having to justify their existence by the fulfilment of their functional performance" (1989: 350-351). Since many traditional buildings have been swept away in Taiwan, how to create and restore a sense of place through public architecture and monuments has become imperative. Apart from the architectural preservation movement initiated by scholars, recently, some local governments, such as I-Lan County government have also started the preservation movement and have made it

part of their cultural policy. They adopted the term ‘historical space’ rather than ‘heritage’ and extended the range of preservation to include any space that has historical meaning such as a village, a street or a building (Chen 1999a).

Seen in this light, the five museums studied in this research are more than a free-learning environment for local residents to explore; they at the same time provide symbolic sites for them to identify with. All participants in this research express positive attitudes toward the renovations of historical buildings as museums and many respondents show their affection for the historical buildings. The interview data also shows that the renovation of historical buildings as museums helps to increase local pride. For example, L-5 expresses his motivation for being a frequent visitor to the I-Lan Museum of Local Political History. He said:

Why I come here often is because I am a little bit proud of being an I-Lan resident. For example, if friends or relatives come to visit me, I would invite them for a meal and after the meal, I would take them here to visit the museum (Interviewee L-5, Male/Age 51-65).

The I-Lan Museum of Local Political History has become one of the most famous attractions in I-Lan county. Many tourists come to visit this museum every year, however, it is most significant to and cherished by local residents. Unlike other public institutions housed in renovated historical buildings such as banks or government offices, the local history and community museums are open to the general public, and display the past, the present and envisage the future of the locality. They are store rooms of collective memories and shared common properties of local residents. To preserve historical buildings, display local culture and history, and show the achievements of the locality helps to build the pride of local residents. In these circumstances, the development of local museums in conjunction with the preservation movement has provided a symbolic space, an alternative location in which people are able to connect their past with the present, and build up their sense of belonging to the place.

### **8.4.2 Learning, Memories and Cultural Identities**

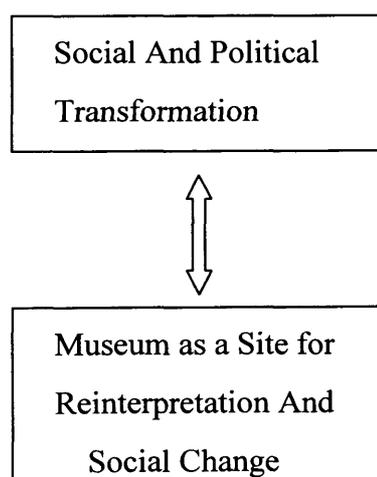
Though the space that the museum constructs is not a real place that visitors can live in, it bears witness to history and is a space full of memories. It functions as a collective symbol for local residents to identify with, recollect and strengthen their sense of belonging.

To investigate how visitors recollect and craft their meanings in the museum, researchers also point out that there is a close connection between visitors' identities and their museum visits. For example, Mclaughlin points out that "a person's self-identity can be defined as a result of a museum visit." But how can one's personal identity be defined as a result of museum visit? Urry elaborated: "by (s)eeing certain scenes or artefacts functions to reawaken repressed desires and thereby to connect past and present" (Urry 1996: 55). The repressed desire in his discussion is common to all human nature such as "how some collective dreams have failed or have faded from memory - while others have at least been partially realized." Thus, he concludes: "To reminisce is to open up possibilities of what might have been, of how events or relationships or careers, could have turned out differently" (1996: 55).

The interview data in the five museums researched also indicates that visitors not only learn but also recollect. On the one hand they get new information and compare it with their prior knowledge to construct their own historical views. Comparisons between different regimes such as the comparison between the KMT government and the Japanese colonial government and lifestyles in different periods of time have come into view. On the other hand, during this process, visitors also recollect and intertwine their museum experiences with their personal experiences. Childhood experience, the time they spent with their family and the old lifestyles emerge when they recollect in the museum. During the learning and recollection process, they constantly compare the information available with their prior knowledge and personal experiences, and reflect upon the present.

To investigate how the museum becomes a site for visitors to construct their cultural

identities, the specific structure of museum time and space is analysed in the previous sections of this chapter. It is a symbolic space that visitors first encounter in the museum. Through the understanding of the past, the construction of collective memories, and the experience of a common fate, the space starts to have concrete meanings for visitors. It is transformed from a symbolic space into a site creating and constructing a sense of place and identity of locality. In the case of the Taipei 228 Memorial Museum, because of the nature of its exhibition, from an understanding of the traumatic national past, visitors tend to reflect upon their national identity and build a sense of Taiwanese consciousness. On the one hand, each individual has constructed personal cultural identity subject to his or her own life experience and the meaning-making process that she or he has in the museum. On the other hand, the establishment of the local museum provides a site for local residents to learn and recollect, which assists them to enhance sense of their local identity. From the local identity to national identity, the local museum has become a location where memories and history have a conversation and different cultural identities form and change in contemporary Taiwan. In these circumstances this research suggests that the role of local museums in Taiwan is to provide a site for visitors to reinterpret and construct the vision of social change. A simple model to illustrate the role of local museums in post-1987 Taiwan is proposed as followed in figure 11:



**Fig. 11: The Role of Local Museums in Post-1987 Taiwan**

The local museum in contemporary Taiwan has become a site through which visitors can reinterpret history, construct cultural identity and reflect upon themselves and society.

## **8.5 Conclusion**

In this chapter the role of the local museum in the construction of cultural identities has been explored. To set the context, it first reviews contemporary Taiwanese society and points out that people have been losing their sense of place due to the deteriorated environment and amnesia of social memories. Therefore, the rise of the architectural preservation movement and the renovation of historical houses as museums have as aims not only the promotion of local culture but also the building of a sense of place and love of locality.

To examine the role of the museum in the construction of people's cultural identities, the post-modernist concept of time and space is summarised and introduced. On the one hand, the museum is a space that visitors are able to break up with their typical space and time that are bounded by their work and daily lives. Though the spaces that the museum constructs is symbolic, they functions as heterotopias, mirrors for reflection. It tells us what we lack in our daily life experience and provides an index - a mirror that points to another possibility. On the other hand, the museum creates a sense of continuity by presenting local or national history and connecting the personal present with the collective past. From the data analysis, it also shows that visitors in different types of museum have acquired different information and therefore construct different meanings of history. These museum experiences also react with their personal identity.

Lastly, this chapter argues that the museum, as a space which is separate from everyday life but also connected to the past, becomes a site for visitors to construct their cultural identities. It is through the process of learning and recollection, as

discussed and analysed in previous chapters, that participants connect themselves with the community, locality or the nation, and construct their historical views and build up their sense of locality.

**Chapter 9 Conclusion And  
Recommendations**

## Introduction

In the past decade there has been a rapid growth of local museums in Taiwan and many of them are housed in renovated historical buildings. What fuels this movement and how it affects people's cultural identities are the main motivations for conducting this research. To have a better picture of the current development of local museums in Taiwan, a preliminary study was conducted in March 2000 during which ten local museums were visited and fourteen museum directors and staff interviewed. Following the initial data analysis and the literature review, it is believed that this current boom in local museums is closely related to the identity crisis that most people face in post-1987 Taiwanese society following rapid social and political transformation. Academic debates on cultural identity have been centred on national identity and several research projects applying quantitative surveys have been carried out. These show an increasing number of people identifying themselves as Taiwanese (Chu 2000; Liu and Ho 1999; Wu 1993). However, as Poole argues: "Construction of the new identity required the discovery or creation of linguistic and cultural resources which were sufficiently rich, complex and fulfilling to replace those which have been lost" (Poole 1999: 31). Apart from the introduction of local studies into the national curriculum and the large number of local studies societies established, the museum constructs a significant site for the creation and construction of new cultural identity. The rapid development of local museums in Taiwan therefore indicates both the government's effort to create cultural resources in forming the conception of national community as well as people's growing interests in the construction of personal and cultural identities based on the locality in which they live.

As mentioned, though several research projects applying qualitative methods have investigated the issue of people's cultural identity, focusing particularly on the relationship between national identities and ethnic backgrounds, none of these have investigated the formation and transformation of people's cultural identity in relation to the rapid development of local museums. To approach this phenomenon, two

scholars' concepts of cultural identity have provided the assumptions and theoretical framework of the research. Castells argues that one's cultural identity is constructed and is subject to various cultural attributes, while Hall emphasises that the idea of cultural identities is not permanently fixed; it is a process of becoming. Applying Castells and Hall's concepts of cultural identity as a theoretical framework, this research aims to investigate visitors' feelings, ideas and insights in detail as well as examine the role of the museum as one of the major variants influencing local residents' construction of cultural identities. To approach this research objective, a qualitative method is applied.

In this chapter, the methodology used in this research will be reflected upon and the key findings will be summarised. From the findings of this research, several suggestions about the management of local museums in Taiwan are proposed. Lastly, the strengths and limits of this research are pointed out and recommendations for future study are made.

### **9.1 Evaluation of The Method of This Study**

It is pointed out that the methodological approach is closely connected with the researcher's epistemology (Mason 1996: 13). The purpose of this research is to understand the rapid development of local museums as well as the depth and complexity of people's accounts and experiences. Quantitative approaches although providing a 'big picture' of this issue, cannot grasp the feelings, insights and the fluid processes of the construction and transformation of each individual's cultural identity. The qualitative interviewing, on the other hand, can help to "generate a fairer and fuller representation of the interviewee's perspectives" (Mason 1996: 42). To better answer the research question, a qualitative approach was chosen and the semi-structured interview was selected as the main method in this research.

The semi-structured interview can be described as "a conversation with a purpose" (Mason 1996: 43). The interview is followed by a set of questions designed by the

research protocol, however each interviewee is probed and encouraged to explain and express their ideas and concepts freely. The purpose is to create “a dialogue with the interviewee” (May 1993: 111). However, it is not easy to have a genuine dialogue with the interviewee especially in the cultural context of Taiwan; there are few qualitative researchers and people easily shy away. To create a trustworthy environment, the method of “participant as observer” was applied. By adopting the role of voluntary museum guard, I was able to gain access to my subjects in a natural context as well as to establish a rapport with other volunteers. This method proved to be very successful; it helped to create a dialogue with interviewees. It also helped to triangulate the interview data and provided a good opportunity to obtain additional insights into the researched subjects and the management of the museum. To triangulate the interview data, first hand and other materials were collected during the fieldwork including the internal documents and publications of the museums.

In addition to qualitative interviewing, the method of multiple-case studies was applied to draw the picture of the recent development of local museums in Taiwan. To cover the range of appropriate settings, five local museums in Taiwan were chosen as case studies. The five museums chosen have all opened recently and are housed in historical buildings. The participants interviewed were all local frequent visitors who had been to the museum more than once in the previous year at the time of this research. During each week of fieldwork, in addition to two preparation days, one interview was conducted on each day, and five participants were interviewed in each case. Using these methods, the researcher was able to carry out an in-depth interview and get the maximum information about each participant’s museum experiences on the one hand; on the other hand the total number of twenty-five interviewees across five cases provided sufficient data to make cross-case comparison.

Unlike most visitor study research which studies either visitors in general or chooses subjects according to age, ethnicity or the pattern of outings, such as family groups and school visits (Chang 1999; Moussouri 1997; Tsai 2002), this research specifically targeted local frequent visitors to the museums to investigate the meaning-making

process of those who have most often used them and have more memories and connection to their locality. Following the completion of fieldwork and data collection, grounded theory approach has been adopted to analyse data and generate patterns of visitors' museum experiences. During the process of data analysis, a model was proposed to explain local frequent visitors' museum experiences in relation to their cultural identities. By so doing, it is hoped to shed light on the understanding of the interaction between local residents and local museums and explore how it influences their cultural identities. The key findings of this research are summarised in the following section.

## **9.2 Key Findings**

This research first examines the social and political situation in post-1987 Taiwan and pinpoints several factors that influenced the development of local museums such as the rise of local culture, the architectural preservation movement and current cultural policy. It also indicates that after decades of suppression of local studies and the practice of nationalist education which emphasised the learning of Chinese history and the construction of Chinese identity, the recent rapid development of local museums reflects people's anxiety and need to know more about their own history and locality, following the lifting of martial law and the progress of democratisation.

In order to identify key variables determining participants' cultural identities in relation to local museums, this study makes a careful and systematic analysis of interview data. Several patterns have emerged. During this process, a model explaining visitors' construction of cultural identities in local museums has emerged. In this model, learning, recollection and connection are identified as three major modes of visitors' experiences that influence the shaping of participants' cultural identities in local museums. Each mode is further elaborated by drawing upon theories and analysing interview data.

To investigate how participants learn in local museums, theories of adult learners and

constructivism were drawn; the data analysis also shows that participants are self-directed learners who acquire information and construct their own meanings. Detailed analysis reveals several learning patterns of participants in local museums such as acquiring information, constructing personal memories in a historical framework and challenging, interpreting and constructing historical views in the local history museum. This research also examines how participants learn in different types of museums. For example, aesthetic pleasure is the major learning activity for those participants in the art museum while co-learning characterises the learning style of the community residents, who gather together to learn about their community and locality.

Local visitors' museum experiences, however, are not purely cognitive; they are interwoven with memories and emotions. In addition to analysing the learning patterns, this research also shed light on how participants recollect in local museums. Theories of collective memories are reviewed; several patterns are discovered by systematic data analysis. Five patterns of memories collected by historical buildings are identified: recollection of a life episode, memories of household life in the past, childhood memories, reconstruction of a historical event and reflection, association and creation of memories. Memories triggered by the museum exhibits are also revealed through data analysis such as the experience of using objects, the economic condition of the past, the relation with family, the collective trauma of historical tragedy and the loss of youth.

From the results of data analysis, this thesis argues that the establishment of local museums with the renovation and preservation of historical building provides a space for people to visit, recollect and identify with. It is, on the one hand, a setting for informal learning enabling participants to walk into the past and acquire information at their own pace. The results of data analysis show that participants undergo a process of dialogue in the museum and tend to compare the information provided with their prior knowledge. They are active learners and during this process, they construct their own historical views. On the other hand, the local frequent visitors' museum

experiences are not only cognitive but also affective. Many of them recollect and interweave their personal memories within the historical framework presented in the museum. It is not only a setting for informal learning but also a 'dream space' as Kavanagh poetically describes (2000).

To further examine how participants learn and recollect in relation to their cultural identities, this research tries to analyse the museum space and time, since space and time compose the two most important perceptions of people and are closely related to the construction and transformation of cultural identities. The museum is first a space for visitors to stroll in, learn and recollect. Through this semi-ritualised process, visitors enter into a time and space that is different from the daily world that they normally live in. Visitors not only enter into a historical space but also travel back to the past. During this process, they are able to learn about history, compare their life styles of the past with the present, and reflect upon the present. From connecting the past with the present, they gradually build up a sense of locality and construct their identities.

In summary, this research pinpoints that in the context of contemporary Taiwan, the development of local and community museums is particularly significant. They are, on the one hand, the results of the architectural preservation movement, which is against the rapid destruction of the traditional architectures brought about by the process of modernisation. On the other hand, it is also a movement to actively preserve and reconstruct social memories and histories of localities, which were suppressed by the authoritarian KMT regime. The museum with its historical building and reconstructed narrative of history therefore provides a site for local residents to learn, recollect and understand the past of the community, the locality and of Taiwan. Through this process, the museum enables visitors to reconnect with their locality, build a sense of belonging and construct their cultural identities.

### 9.3 Review of Theories

Informed by theories of sociology and cultural studies, this research lends support to Hall's idea of the dynamic nature of cultural identity; the results of data analysis show that participants' identities are not fixed but subject to change within different social context. The local museum provides a site for participants to reflect upon and compare their prior knowledge with the messages provided by the museum. This research suggests in the context of the museum, it is a dialectic process that the participants construct their cultural identities which is not only "a 'moveable feast': formed and transformed continuously in relation to the ways we are represented or addressed in the cultural systems which surround us" (Hall 1992: 277) but are also interwoven with personal experiences and memories.

Secondly, as pointed out by Larrain and Bhabha, the 'other' plays a significant role in the construction of cultural identity (Bhabha 1994; Larrain 1994). The data analysis of this research indicates that the culture of the others provide meaningful references for participants to compare with. The purpose is, however not only to distinguish themselves from others but sometimes to identify with. In this process, one culture might be incorporated to distinguish from another culture. In the political context of Taiwan, in order to construct a Taiwanese identity, some participants identify with the culture of the coloniser, the Japanese culture, and integrate the colonial experience as part of Taiwanese culture to distinguish it from Chinese culture. Some other participants however recognise that all cultures, including Chinese, Japanese and other cultures such as American culture which have influenced people in Taiwan parts of their culture.

If we reviewed Castells' theory of three identities (the legitimate, the resistant and the project identities) in a broader social and political context of Taiwan, during the KMT regime, the Chinese identity was the dominant and the only legitimate identity. The National Palace Museum established in 1965 represented the dominant cultural identity of the regime and provided symbols for people in Taiwan to identity with.

During that period of time, a resistant identity was developing, mainly expressed by political dissidents. The resistant identity however has not been widely recognized and identified by people in Taiwan until the lifting of martial law in 1987. After the lifting of martial law, the long repressed resistant identity has emerged and expressed in various forms, such as the rise in the interest of local studies and the establishment of the oppositional party. In 1990s' Taiwan, there was no longer only one resistant identity represented by the oppositional party. Instead, there is an effort to construct a new Taiwanese identity, a project identity in Castells' term, which is based on the locality to resolve the identity conflicts arising from different cultural identities between different groups of people in Taiwan (Castells 1997a).

In this context, the rapid development of local museums is part of the project which aims to build new cultural identities based on the locality. The narrative and history presented in the museum assists participants in constructing their historical views in different frameworks and further influence how they reflect upon their cultural identities. This research points out that different types of museums contribute to the formation of different cultural identities. For example, participants in the Bai-mi Museum develop their identity with the community while participants in the Taipei 228 Memorial Museum tend to reflect upon their identity on the issue of national event. From the local identity to national identity, the local museum has become a site for reinterpretation and social change, where memories and history have a conversation, and different cultural identities are taking form and transforming in contemporary Taiwan.

#### **9.4 Implications for Practice**

The findings of this research indicate that the local museum is a significant site through which local residents learn, recollect and build a sense of locality. The renovated historical building provides a symbolic landmark for local residents to identify with. This research focuses on frequent visitors. Twenty-five participants were interviewed, eleven of whom were over fifty years old. The fieldwork shows

that these participants are very eager to talk to the researcher about their memories and childhood experiences. Within the historical building and local exhibits displayed, the local museum plays a particularly important role for older local residents to recollect and reminisce. Their memories indeed construct part of the intangible evidences of local history. Seen in this perspective, the collection of the local museum should not be limited to tangible material culture but also to intangible evidence of locality. In the five cases researched, only the Taipei 228 Memorial Museum has oral history projects collecting memories of the family members of victims. However, it is not only the memories in relation to the historical event such as the 228 Incident that are worth collecting. This research also demonstrates that memories of local residents have varied layers of meaning; they provide a vivid portrait of the past. Recollections of the locality are also valuable resources, which endow history with sentiments and feelings.

Thus, this research suggests that local museums might seek to enhance their role in facilitating reminiscence. Documenting oral history can contribute to the collection of local museums and provide different perspectives of history. In addition to collecting memories, there are various ways to communicate local residents' memories in the museum. For example, workshops based around reminiscence might provide opportunities for interaction between local residents and tourists and more importantly between the older and the younger generations. As Cheng suggests, such activities not only help to build the self-esteem of older participants but also provide opportunities for inter - generational education (Cheng 2002).

Secondly, this research also examines the museum exhibition in relation to the construction of cultural identity. Though visitors are active in constructing their own personalised meanings, nevertheless, the narrative and exhibits of the museum provide information and a historical framework which individuals appropriate in order to construct their own historical views. In the political context of contemporary Taiwan, there is an effort by the central government to construct a Taiwanese identity. Since the construction of national identity is based on a shared culture and history, the

museum with the collection and exhibition of material culture is considered by the government to be one of the most important institutions which assist to form the national identity. The recent special exhibition “Ilha Formosa; The Emergence of Taiwan on the World Scene in the Seventeenth Century” held in the National Palace Museum in Taipei is the best example<sup>41</sup>. It was the first time that the National Palace Museum had held a special exhibition explicitly about Taiwanese culture. It is very significant since the National Palace Museum is known for its collection and dissemination of Chinese culture. To exhibit Taiwanese history in the National Palace Museum has signified a shift of legitimate identity from Chinese to Taiwanese identity. The aim of this exhibition is to teach people to understand Taiwanese history in the context of the world history. The history of Taiwan is constructed from the beginning of the seventeenth century, when people from China first emigrated to Taiwan. This historical view, however, was challenged and criticised as a devaluation of the aboriginal people who have lived in Taiwan for more than four thousand years before the Chinese immigrants first came to Taiwan in the seventeenth century (Ding 2003). The subject of the construction of Taiwanese identity in this exhibition is therefore the Han Chinese who emigrated to Taiwan before 1945.

Moreover the historical views presented in the exhibitions of the five museums researched are mostly based on the viewpoints of the Taiwanese majority, and the voices of minority groups are under-represented. In Chapter Four, I have pinpointed that although the Taipei 228 Memorial Museum attempted to present the ‘objective’ historical facts, the narrative is constructed to express the feelings of Taiwanese people, and the experiences of new immigrants from China are largely ignored. Similarly, although there are panels briefly documenting the activities of aboriginal people before Taiwanese people came to settle in Peitou area, the local history narrated in the Peitou Hot Springs Museum is centred around the experiences of Taiwanese people. Nevertheless, data analysis shows that even a brief presentation of the history of aboriginal people assists participants to have a more inclusive historical

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<sup>41</sup> “Ilha Formosa: The Emergence of Taiwan on the World Scene in the Seventeenth Century” was a special exhibition held from January 24 to April 30, 2003.

point of view. As Sandell argues, the museum has the potential and a responsibility to combat social inequality (Sandell 2002). While eager to construct a new Taiwanese identity based on the locality and common past, it is imperative to represent and include multiple voices reflecting different groups in Taiwan instead of constructing one dominant ideology and monolithic cultural identity. These should include not only original ethnic groups but also recent immigrants from China and Vietnam who move to Taiwan because of marriage, and minority groups such as migrant workers from the Philippine. They have played an increasingly important role in contemporary Taiwanese society but there has been no attempt to introduce and represent their religions, life styles and experiences in the museum (Chen 2003).

Thus, a more reflective examination of the narratives and history presented in the museum is needed. By doing so, it is hoped that the museum in Taiwan can be more inclusive and empower more people in the search for their cultural identity.

### **9.5 Recommendations for Future Study**

This research is only an initial effort to understand how local frequent visitors' museum experiences influence their cultural identities. Basically, it covers three different types of museums as case studies: the community museum, the art and craft museum and the history museum. The strength of this selection and combination helps to identify and compare participants' responses and experiences in different types of museums. However, it also limits the depth of discussion on each type of museum. Also the research focuses on frequent visitors and does not include other types of local resident such as family and school visits and their approach and use of local museums in relation to their construction of cultural identity. In addition, what this research investigates is a recent phenomenon and, as pointed out by Hall and Castells, shows that the construction of people's cultural identities is subject to change in different social contexts. More longitudinal research is therefore needed for further understanding of this topic.

In addition, though this study has described and discussed the recent development of local museums in Taiwan, it is by nature a piece of research rather than evaluation. In other words, this research aims at “the generation of new knowledge and the exploration of hypotheses” while evaluation provides more immediate useful information for the museum to make decisions or improvement (Hooper-Greenhill 1994: 69). In this research, I have described the background of the establishment, the development and the characteristics of each museum researched. At the time the research was completing and finishing, the economy of Taiwan was being deeply challenged and influenced by the enormous availability of cheap labour from China, and the economic situation in Taiwan is getting worse. Under these circumstances, many private museums have faced severe financial difficulties and some have been forced to close (Zhou and Zhao 2002). Similarly, the subsidies to local museums are also being cut considerably. Though there are several projects on founding and establishing local museums such as the new project launched by the Council for Cultural Affairs, Administrative Yuan to establish one local culture museum in each county, the growth of local museums has been declining at the beginning of the twenty-first century mainly due to financial problems (Ding 2002).

In this challenging climate, further evaluation and research on the local museum is needed. In addition to more research into visitors to understand about their experiences and needs in the museum, more work needs to be carried out in each museum to evaluate exhibitions and other public programs, in order to support ongoing developments and improvement in museum practice.

# Appendices

**Appendix 1: A Covering Letter Sent to The Museums for Preliminary Study**

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**Museum Studies**

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*Director and Head of Department*  
Professor Eilean Hooper-Greenhill  
BA (Reading), MA, PhD, DipED, ATC (London), FMA

To whom it may concern

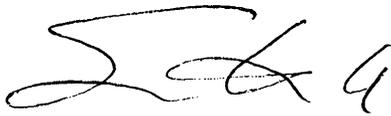
Friday, 24 March 2000

Dear Sir/Madam

Carrie Chen is a research student at this University and is undertaking important work examining the development of community museums in Taiwan. This work relies upon Ms Chen gaining an insight into this process through discussions with leading figures in communities and museums. I would be extremely grateful if you could assist her with her studies as I am sure that the results of her work will prove beneficial to future museum development. If you wish for any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

陳佳利目前是本校博物館系的研究生，研究關於台灣社區博物館的發展現況。這項研究有賴於和社區及博物館領導決策人士進行訪談，以了解其發展狀況。如您能同意協助進行這項研究，接受訪談，我將十分的感謝。我相信她的研究成果將有益於台灣博物館未來的發展。如您需更進一步的資料，隨時歡迎和我聯絡。

Yours sincerely



Dr Simon Knell  
Research Supervisor

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## Appendix 2: Interview Questions in the Preliminary Study

**Name of Interviewee:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Institution:** \_\_\_\_\_

### Part I: General

1. Would you please tell me your name, educational background and your job title?
2. How many years have you been working here? Have you changed your job title and duty during your work here? If yes, what did you do before and what is your job duty now? Would you describe a little bit more about your work?
3. Do you know the organization and purpose of your cultural centre? Would you state as fully as possible the present function, i.e. the general purpose and of your museum?
4. What is the structure of your centre and resources of founding?

### Part II: Community Involvement

5. What is the present geographical area of responsibility of your centre and who is the centre for? What are the visitor numbers?
6. Do you think that your centre is focused on local needs? Why?  
(Who are your target audiences, tourists or local community?)
7. Are there particular staff in charge of the community related work? If yes, how many are they (Full time/part time/volunteers) and what kind of work do they mainly deal with?
8. Did your centre work and engage with community groups in the past years? If yes, in what way?
9. In your experience, what are the main strengths and weaknesses of working with community residents?
10. Does your centre have volunteers from the community? What are they (the community groups/teachers/ students/retired/working class...) and what are their

duties?

11. What are the general complains or criticisms that you heard most from the visitors or the community groups?
12. Could you describe 1-3 exhibition or activities that you think are most community oriented? Please describe them and explain the reasons for your selection.

### **Part III: Major Changes of The Cultural Centre**

13. What factors influence the direction of your centre? (For example: the director/mission statement/the local political power/the central policy/the scholars and museum professionals/the community people)
14. In your opinion, what are the major changes of the centre in the past years compared to your first year here? What reasons do you think make this change?
15. In your opinion, do mayors of different political parties influence or inform the direction and policy of your centre? If yes, what are the differences?
16. What are the influences of the “Project of Total Community Construction” launched by the Council for Cultural Planning and Development on the direction of the centre and museum exhibits?
17. What is your opinion of the “Project of Community Construction”? Do you think it is successful in activating the communities and enhance the community identity by holding community fair and cultural activities in your area?
18. What are the main difficulties or weakness of your centre when carrying out the “Project of Community Construction”?

### **Part IV: Projects of Construction Of The New Local Museum**

19. Are there any projects underway for constructing new local museums in your centre? If yes, what are they?
20. In your opinion, what and who motivates these project? (director/central policy/major/local people) Would you like to describe the process of proposing and carrying out these projects (including time, people and funding involved)?
21. What are the main purpose and function of building these local museums? Who are these museums for?

22. Is there any local museum open to the public in your area? What are the annual visitor figures?
23. What difficulties do you face when participating in and carrying out these projects?
24. What results (economically, socially & culturally) do you expect from the establishment these new local museums?
- Do you anticipate that these newly established museums will attract more visitors from tourists or community residents?
  - Do you think these newly established museums will help the local economy and stimulate the traditional art and craft scene?
  - Do you believe these newly established museums will help to raise the local identity and increase the self-esteem of people live in this city?
  - In your opinion, what change will these projects bring to the museum profession and your work particularly?
25. In your opinion, what trends can you identify in Taiwanese museum development?

#### **Part V. Feedback & Reflection**

26. In your profession, what kind of support or resources do you personally need most?
27. Do you have any comment on this interview or any suggestion about the research?
28. Could you suggest or provide some information or paperwork in relation to the present research?
29. Could you suggest some people involved with the construction of local museum or “Project of Community Construction” that you think will help the present research by interview?

### **Appendix 3: The Location of Five Case Studies**



**Appendix 4: A Covering Letter Sent to Five Museums Researched**



University of  
Leicester

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**Museum Studies**

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*Director and Head of Department*  
Professor Eilean Hooper-Greenhill  
BA (Reading), MA, PhD, DipED, ATC (London), FMA

To whom it may concern

5 February 2001

Dear Sir/Madam

Carrie Chen is a PhD student at this University and is undertaking important work examining the development of community museums in Taiwan. This work relies upon Ms Chen gaining an insight into this process through intensive fieldwork. Her fieldwork will require her to interview leading figures in museums and to observe and document the exhibition as well as to interview visitors. It will take her approximately one week to do the fieldwork. I would be extremely grateful if you could assist her with her studies, as I am sure that the results of her work will prove beneficial to future museum development. If you wish for any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

陳佳利目前是本校博物館系博士班的研究生，研究關於台灣社區博物館的發展現況。這項研究有賴於密集的田野調查，包括和博物館領導決策人士進行訪談，實地觀察展覽及紀錄，並與參觀的觀眾進行訪談。整個田野工作進行約需一個星期。如您能同意協助進行這項研究，我將十分的感謝。我相信她的研究成果將有益於台灣博物館未來的發展。如您需更進一步的資料，隨時歡迎和我聯絡。

Yours sincerely

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## **Appendix 5: Interview Questionnaire**

### **A. Semi-Structured Interview Questions for Visitors**

#### **What kind of museum experience do community residents have?**

1. What is your impression of the exhibition and the museum in general?
2. What do you find most satisfying about the visit? Is there anything different in this museum which made your repeated visit rewarding? What is it?
3. Which exhibit/object do you like most? Why?
4. Which exhibit/object you do dislike most? Why?
5. Has anything in particular disappointed you? Why or what do you expect?

#### **How do local museums construct history & people's opinion of Taiwanese v.s. Chinese culture?**

6. Choose an object (it may be controversial or has clear Taiwanese message) to ask the visitor's reflection about it. What kind of message do you think this object tell you?
7. In your opinion, what kind of information and story does this museum tell you?
8. Whose story do you think it is? Do you like/agree with it or not?
9. Do you think there is an original Taiwanese/local culture? If yes, can you describe it? If not, why?
10. In the last decade, there is a boom of Taiwanese study, some people argue that there is no Taiwanese history or it is part of Chinese history. What is your opinion of this?
11. Do you know there is lot of museums founded in the past ten years? Some people think there are too many and that this is unnecessary. What is your opinion of it?
12. Can you tell me which museum in Taiwan do you think best represents the culture of people in Taiwan? Why?

#### **Do people enhance their local identities through visiting museums?**

13. Do you come to this museum often? Why? Apart from visiting this museum, have

you participated in any activity in the museum? Please describe it. (If they are volunteers, they will be asked question 14)

14. *Could you tell me why do you choose to become a volunteer? Tell me what is good about it and your personal experience of becoming and being a volunteer.*
15. Being the local resident, how do you feel about the founding of many local museums in this area in the past decade?
16. In your idea, what types of museums most represent your county?
17. Is there something you expect to find but not here? What is that? Or if you can choose, what kind of object will you like to add to this exhibition that will represent your interest?
18. Do you notice this is a historical building? Have you been here before it is restored into museum? Tell me about your memory and experience about it.
19. What is your opinion of the restoration of historical building? Do you like the idea of re-using it as the museum or would you rather see other uses of it?

#### **The Socio - Political Issues**

20. Do you notice this museum is housed within a Japanese style building? What is your opinion of the museum building?
21. Will you like the museum to exhibit objects made or used by other ethnic groups? What is your view toward other ethnic groups' culture? Do you think theirs are different from yours? How?
22. Do you think it is possible for people to change their views toward other ethnic groups? If yes, what and how do you think will people change their views toward the other ethnic groups?

## **B. Semi-Structured Interview Questions for Museum Staff**

### **How do local museums contribute to the rise of cultural nativism?**

1. Could you tell me why this museum was established?
2. What's the purpose (mission statements) of this museum? What is your collection policy?
3. What artefacts and educational programs are exhibited and run? Do you think there is a tendency toward nativism?

### **How do local museums construct history & people's opinion of Taiwanese v.s. Chinese culture?**

4. In your opinion, what kind of information and story does this museum want to tell? Do you like/agree with it or not?
5. Whose story do you think it is?
6. Do you think there is an original Taiwanese/local culture? If yes, can you describe it? If not, why?
7. In the last decade, there is a boom of Taiwanese study, some people argue that there is no Taiwanese history or it's part of Chinese history. What is your opinion of it?
8. Can you tell me which museum in Taiwan do you think most represents our culture? Why?

### **Do people enhance their local identities through visiting museums?**

9. Are there many local resident visiting the museum? Apart from visiting this museum, do they participate in any activity in the museum?
10. What do you expect from the visitors? What do you think the museum can provide the visitors?
11. Now I would like to ask about yourself. Why do you choose to work in this museum?
12. There are several local museum founded in this area in the past decade, some people think there are too many. What's your opinion about it?

13. Have you been here before this historical house was renovated as a museum? Tell me about your memory and experience about it.
14. What is your opinion of the restoration of historical building into museums? Do you like the idea of re-using it as the museum or would you rather see other uses of it?

**The Socio - Political Issues**

15. I believe you must notice this museum is a Japanese style building. What's your opinion of the museum building?
16. Do you agree that ethnic issues cause the major conflicts of present Taiwan?
17. Do you think the museum can change visitors' view toward other ethnic groups?  
Does your museum intend to change visitors' view toward other ethnic groups?

**Appendix 6: Questionnaire for Visitors**

<b>Name</b>		<b>*Gender</b>	female male
<b>*Your Age Group is</b>	under 20 20-35 36-50 over 50 years	<b>Job</b>	In full-time work housewife student retired voluntary work others
<b>*What ethnicity group do you think you belong to?</b>	Chinese Taiwanese Minnan Hakka Mainlander The Aboriginal New Taiwanese		
<b>Education</b>	Primary school                      College & university Junior high school                  Graduate school & above Senior high school graduate		
<b>*How many time have you visited this museum in the last year?</b>	First time visitor    The second time visitor 3-5 times in the last year    More than 5 times		
<b>*Where do you live?</b>	_____ City (County) _____ Area		
<b>Why do you visit the museum today?</b>	Entertainment    Learning    Family accompany Meeting people    Voluntary work    Other		
<b>Which part of the museum do you like most?</b>	Exhibition                  Facilities (toilet, restaurant etc.) Building                  Environment		
<b>Do you have any comment on this museum?</b>			
<b>Are you interested in participating in a one- hour interview in this museum to help us understand your experience of visiting this museum?</b>	Yes No		

## Appendix 7: The Profile of Interviewees

## A. Visitors

Museum	Visitor	Gender	Age	Job	Ethic Identity	Education	Frequency	Motivation
The Bai-Mi Clog Museum	B-1	M	2	V	M	B	5+	2,7
	B-2	F	2	F	T	B	5+	
	B-3	M	3	R	C	C	5+	
	B-4	M	2	F	C, T, M, NT	C	5+	7
	B-5	F	1	F	NT	D	3-5	1
The I-Lan Museum of Local Political History	L-1	M	1	F	T	D	3-5	2
	L-2	F	1	F	T	D	3-5	5
	L-3	M	1	F	T	D	2	1,8
	L-4	M	2	O	T	D	5+	7,8
	L-5	M	3	F	T	C	5+	5
The Taipei 228 Memorial Museum	T-1	F	3	F	T	C	2	8
	T-2	M	2	F	T	E	2	1
	T-3	F	3	H, V	T	C	5+	7
	T-4	F	3	V	T	D	5+	7
	T-5	M	3	V	T, Ma	D	5+	2,3
The Peitou Hot Springs Museum	P-1	M	1	S, V		D	5+	7
	P-2	F	3	V	T	C	5+	7
	P-3	F	2	V	T	C	5+	7
	P-4	M	3	V, R	C, T, NT	E	5+	1,2,3,7
	P-5	F	3	V	T	C	5+	7
The Hsinchu Municipal Glass Museum	G-1	M	3	V	Ma	D	5+	7
	G-2	F	2	H	C, M	B	5+	7
	G-3	M	1	F, V	C	D	5+	2,7
	G-4	M	2	O	C	D	3-5	1
	G-5	M	3	R	NT	C	5+	7

**B. Museum Staff**

Museum	Visitor	Gender	Age	Education
The Bai-Mi Clog Museum	B-a	F	1	C
	B-b	M	2	C
The I-Lan Museum of Local Political History	L-a	F	1	C
The Taipei 228 Memorial Museum	T-a	M	1	C
	T-b	F	1	C
The Peitou Hot Springs Museum	P-a	F	1	C
The Hsinchu Municipal Glass Museum	G-a	F	1	C

**Reference**

\*Age: 1: 20-35 2: 36-50 3: 51-65 4: Above 65

\*Job: F: Full time Job/ H: Housewife/ S: Student /V: Volunteer /R: Retired /O: Other

\*Ethnicity: C: Chinese T: Taiwanese M: Minan H: Hakka Ma: Mainlander

A: Aboriginal NT: New Taiwanese

\*Education: A. Primary school or under B. Junior High School C. Senior High School D. College

E. Post Graduate & Above

\*Motivation: 1: Entertainment 2: Learning 3: Interest in Old House 4: School Homework

5: Company Friends or Family Members 6: Participating Events 7: Volunteer

8: Others

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