

New National History and the Shaping of Taiwanese Identity:  
Representing Taiwan at the National Museum of Taiwan History

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Shih-Hui Li  
School of Museum Studies  
University of Leicester

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# New National History and the Shaping of Taiwanese Identity: Representing Taiwan at the National Museum of Taiwan History

Shih-Hui Li

Since the 1970s, Taiwan has been gradually moving towards a new transitional stage in which many new paradigms have been established in guiding the future of this island. Firstly, in searching for Taiwanese local cultures and history that were marginalised within the traditional China-centred singular national discourse, *Bentuhua* or Taiwanisation has become the mainstream intellectual current during the past 40 years. Secondly, due to a rapid and peaceful process of political democratisation, Taiwan has established a contemporary constitutional democratic state in which the national boundaries of the ‘Taiwanese people’ have been expanded in redefining Taiwan as a multicultural, poly-ethnic ‘nation state’ with a pluralistic and inclusive national identity.

In the light of ‘reconstructing Taiwan’ – *Bentuhua*, democratisation, anti-authoritarianism and the rewriting of national history – this thesis takes the newly-built National Museum of Taiwan History (NMTH) as its case study. Viewing the NMTH in the context of a transitional Taiwanese society in which the old paradigms of history-making and national identity are transforming, this thesis analyses the NMTH’s political missions, knowledge-shaping practices, historical representation, public roles and social concerns in order to contribute a comprehensive explanation of how *Bentuhua* has become the guiding principle for building new national museums in Taiwan and for developing the new public role of Taiwan’s national museums.

Combining the external social and internal institutional contexts, this thesis is the first to examine Taiwan’s national museums from the research angle of *Bentuhua* and Taiwan’s democratisation, which provides a clear picture of new and emerging situations in Taiwan during the past 20 years. In the case of the NMTH, Taiwan’s unique national history and social contexts such as rapid democratisation, negotiation of ethnic relationships and the localisation of national identity are presented. All these new developments of Taiwanese society furnish contemporary Taiwan with a new and significant case study in dealing with the issue of identity politics in national museums.

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I would particularly like to thank my supervisor, Professor Simon Knell, who has continuously supported my research, encouraged me to be confident, and guided me on how to think about, critique and organise a qualifying PhD thesis. I will always remember what Professor Knell told me: that the PhD research process is like the journey occasioned by climbing a mountain. Three years ago, I stood at the bottom of the mountain and wondered how it could be possible to climb to the top. Now I am at the top of the mountain and understand the route very clearly.

Thanks to all the interviewees who participated in my research: the former director, present director and curators of the National Museum of Taiwan History and the visitors who talked about their visiting experiences with me at the museum.

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## Introduction

### **The New Turn of National History and National Identity in Contemporary Taiwan: A Case Study of the National Museum of Taiwan History**

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#### *Research aim and research objectives*

In October 2011, a new national museum opened in Tainan, Taiwan. The subject of much debate concerning Taiwanese history and Taiwanese national identity, the National Museum of Taiwan History (NMTH, 國立臺灣歷史博物館) has been attracting considerable public attention in recent years. As the first national museum to collect, study, display and teach Taiwanese history in this island, the birth of the NMTH reflects the recent achievements of *Bentuhua* (本土化, 'Taiwanisation' or indigenisation) and Taiwanese democratisation. Constructing a comprehensive nation-making narrative characterising Taiwanese identity, *Bentuhua* has shaped a new national identity signifying – for most residents of Taiwan – one that is Taiwanese rather than Chinese.<sup>1</sup> With the recognition of a democratic multicultural society, the meaning of 'Taiwanese people' is now inclusive and no longer discriminates between Taiwan's diverse ethnic groups and cultures. Taiwan now constitutes a transitional society in which the traditional political paradigm, history-making and national identity are changing. In order to respond to the social need to represent this new plural national identity in national museums, the NMTH has been attempting to create a public forum where voices from different social and ethnic groups can be presented.

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<sup>1</sup> Nai-Te Wu, 'Trend of national identities in Taiwan 1992-2005', in *Social Change in Taiwan*,

Focusing on the NMTH and its historical representation, the main aim of this study is to understand why Taiwanese society needs a new national history museum and how this museum, as a historian-author, uses Taiwanese history as the basis for new collective memories which differ from those of the old China-centred national history in shaping the new plural Taiwanese identity.<sup>2</sup> In order to achieve this aim, this study has four research objectives which seek to provide a comprehensive interpretation of the NMTH and its Taiwanese contexts.

Firstly, using the concept of ‘governmentality’<sup>3</sup> and understanding Taiwanese history as an ‘expertise’<sup>4</sup> that is empowered by the political mission of reconstructing the Taiwanese national imagination, this study proposes to understand how *Bentuhua* and democratisation are applied as guiding principles in constructing Taiwanese history as a new national history during the past 40 years. By analysing the reconstruction and institutionalisation of Taiwanese history within the research framework of nationalism, this study proposes to establish the intellectual and contextual connections between a transitional Taiwanese society and the contemporary cultural policies of building new national museums that display Taiwan. In this sense, this study argues that the NMTH plays a pioneering role in representing the new spirits of Taiwanese history and the new national imagination reshaped by this new national history.

Focusing on the knowledge-shaping processes of the NMTH, the second research

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<sup>2</sup> A-Chin Hsiao, *Reconstructing Taiwan: The Cultural Politics of Contemporary Nationalism* (Taipei: Linking Books, 2012), 320-322.

<sup>3</sup> Michel Foucault, ‘Governmentality’ in *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality with Two Lectures by and Interview with Michel Foucault*, ed. Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon and Peter Miller (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991).

<sup>4</sup> Laurajane Smith, *Archaeological Theory and the Politics of Cultural Heritage* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004).

objective is to investigate how the NMTH transforms academic historical research into historical exhibitions. This study will reveal the narrative processes the NMTH uses to present a new historical framework that is different from that of traditional political history and the fragmentary historical knowledge taught in history classes. In this study, the original research and exhibition projects of the NMTH will be analysed by showing not only the negotiation process of various professional voices but also the organic development of the NMTH. Opened in a new multicultural and plural Taiwanese society, the NMTH realised that the traditional one-centred master narrative could no longer satisfy the needs of the Taiwanese people. From the perspective of text-production, this study argues that when facing a transitional Taiwanese society, the NMTH has been attempting to create new ways of writing, telling and displaying history in which diverse and marginalised voices can be addressed.

The third research objective of this study focuses on the interrelationships between the NMTH (historian-author), museum exhibitions (historical texts) and museum visitors (readers). With the recognition that ordinary people have their individual ways of seeing and telling the past like professional historians, this study empowers museum visitors as meaning-makers and conducts oral interviews with them in order to collect individual visiting experiences and nostalgic memory-telling. Through analysing the triangular relationship between the individual visitor's historical consciousness, memories and storytelling, this study proposes to investigate not only how the individual visitor responds to the textual environment that the NMTH constructs, but also his/her sense of identity with Taiwan.

In facing the multiculturalism of contemporary Taiwanese society, the NMTH presents a new public role in providing a meeting place for diverse Taiwanese ethnic groups. The political mission of this new national museum is to deal with multiple voices, challenging viewpoints and changing national identity rather than displaying a specific, monolithic official ideology. It is in this sense that the last research objective of this study is to examine how the NMTH deals with contemporary Taiwanese social issues through special exhibitions. In dealing with multiple viewpoints, the issue-based special exhibitions utilise collaborative community projects in order to share the authority of history-making with the public and present more people's viewpoints than the permanent exhibition.

## ***Methodologies***

### ***1. Bentuhua, Taiwanese identity and Taiwanese history***

*Bentuhua* is a distinctive Taiwanese political and cultural current of thought that emerged in the 1970s. As a context for the institutionalisation of Taiwanese history and the shaping of Taiwanese national identity, *Bentuhua* is the key for this study which seeks to understand the relationships between Taiwanese history, Taiwanese nationalism and the NMTH. The term *Bentuhua* is complex and composed of multiple meanings. In the context of the post-war political development of Taiwan, *Bentuhua* can be associated with the model of what Japanese sociologist, Masahiro Wakabayashi (若林正丈), calls the 'Taiwanisation of the Republic of China' (中華民國的臺灣化). This model provides a comprehensive interpretation of the reconstitution of Taiwanese national imagination from Chinese nationalism to

contemporary multicultural nationalism since 1949 when the sovereignty of the Republic of China has been limited in Taiwan.<sup>5</sup> In challenging the traditional Kuomintang's (KMT, Chinese Nationalist Party, 國民黨) Chinese national integration policy, Taiwanese nationalism plays an important role in challenging not only Kuomintang's national integration policy but also its authoritarian political structure.<sup>6</sup>

In the process of Taiwanisation, the considerable amount of anti-Kuomintang political discourse arising from *Dangwai's* (黨外)<sup>7</sup> local elites and the later Democratic Progress Party (DPP, 民進黨), critiquing the party's authoritarian rule and Chinese cultural ideology, formed a thrust which pushed the boundaries of Taiwanese political and cultural debate from intellectual circles to public discussion. It is *Dangwai's* cultural elites or what A-Chin Hsiao (蕭阿勤) describes as the 'Taiwanese post-war generation of returning to reality',<sup>8</sup> which firstly systematically used Taiwanese history as a new national discourse with the aim of constructing Taiwanese nationalism.

The 1980s and 1990s witnessed a Taiwanese national revival amongst the island's intellectual elite which sought to reconstruct the Taiwanese national imagination via rediscovering local literature, Taiwanese history and Taiwanese language.<sup>9</sup> The

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<sup>5</sup> Masahiro Wakabayashi, *The Post-War Taiwanese Political History: The Progress of the Taiwanisation of the Republic of China* (Taipei: National Taiwan University Press, 2014).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 485-500.

<sup>7</sup> The term *Dangwai* literally implies 'outside the Kuomintang', which refers to those political communities and intellectuals who are not organised within the power structure of Kuomintang. As the earliest protest movement in Taiwan, *Dangwai* had challenged Kuomintang's one-party rule and its China-centred national imagination. The objectives of *Dangwai* are struggling for political democratisation and constructing a new Taiwanese national discourse in opposing Kuomintang's official authorised Chinese national discourse.

<sup>8</sup> A-Chin Hsiao, *Return to Reality: Political and Cultural Change in 1970s Taiwan and the Postwar Generation* (Taipei: Institute of Sociology, Academia Sinica, 2010).

<sup>9</sup> Hsiao, *Reconstructing Taiwan*.

effort of establishing a Taiwanese local culture permitted *Dangwai*'s cultural elites to find new ways of interpreting the Taiwanese past, present and future when facing the subsequent international frustration of the 1970s.<sup>10</sup> The rediscovery and construction of marginalised Taiwanese historical experiences offered *Dangwai*'s intellectuals alternative discourses with which to challenge Kuomintang's hegemonic power over interpreting the national past and defining Taiwan's uniqueness.

For *Dangwai*'s intellectuals, the key to constructing Taiwanese nationalism is to define *what* makes Taiwan different from China. The earliest debate on this issue had been accompanied by *Dangwai*'s ethnic discourse of seeing Kuomintang's government as a foreign regime in which Kuomintang's political elites and the subordinate *Waishengren*<sup>11</sup> group (外省人) formed a dominant class. The concept of 'original domicile complex' (省籍情結), which signifies the political and ideological opposition between the two imagined ethnic groups of *Waishengren* (外省人) and *Benshengren* (本省人)<sup>12</sup> provides researchers with an effective model for investigating the development of Taiwanese nationalism and *Bentuhua* movements in the 1970s and the 1980s. Research on Taiwanese national identity suggests that Kuomintang's authoritarian rule and China-centred cultural hegemony caused political, economic and social discrimination between *Waishengren* and *Benshengren*.

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<sup>10</sup> Mao-Kuei Chang, 'Taiwanese Political Transformation and the Process of Ethnic Politics', in *Ethnic Politics and Policies*, ed. Cheng-Feng Shih (Taipei: Vanguard, 1997), 37-71. J. Bruce Jacobs, 'Taiwanization in Taiwan's Politics', in *Cultural, ethnic, and political nationalism in contemporary Taiwan bentuhua*, ed. John Makeham and A-Chin Hsiao (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 17-54. Hsiao, *Return to Reality*. Hsiao, *Reconstructing Taiwan*. Wakabayashi, *The Progress of the Taiwanisation*.

<sup>11</sup> The term *Waishengren* 外省人 (Mainlanders) refers to the immigrants from different provinces of Mainland China who arrived in Taiwan after 1945 when the Republic of China took over the rule of Taiwan from Japan.

<sup>12</sup> *Benshengren* 本省人 (Native Taiwanese), mainly refers to *Hoklo* (河洛人) or *Mingnanren* (閩南人), the first Han immigrants from southern Fujian Province, Mainland China. This ethnic group has been living in Taiwan since the Qing Dynasty and experienced Japanese colonial rule.

The ethnic conflicts between the two groups of people not only stimulated ethnic mobilisation in political support but also developed great influence in shaping the essentialities of Taiwanese nationalism.<sup>13</sup> In constructing a new national identity, the transformation of Chinese original domicile into ethnic opposition firstly forms a powerful rhetorical language to stress ‘the differences between “we (*Benshengren*/Taiwanese) and they (*Waishengren*/Chinese)” which creates the uniqueness of Taiwanese national culture that makes Taiwan different from China.<sup>14</sup>

The same approach can also be seen in confirming the historical significance of Japanese colonial rule. For, in building the ‘common experiences’ of Taiwan, *Dangwai*’s writers and historians traced this back to the Japanese colonial period and argued that owing to the rule by the ‘other nation’, the national concept of ‘Taiwanese consciousness’ had emerged in the Japanese period, and formed the original imagined common consciousness in Taiwan.<sup>15</sup> This transformation of Taiwanese history from local history to national history demonstrates that Japanese

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<sup>13</sup> Nai-Te Wu, ‘Domicile consciousness, political support, and national identity’, in *The Ethnic Relations and National Identity*, ed. Chang, Mao-Kuei (Taipei: The Research Centre for National Policies, 1993), 27-51. Mao-Kuei Chang, ‘The original domicile and nationalism’ in *The Ethnic Relations and National Identity*, ed. Chang, Mao-Kuei (Taipei: The Research Centre for National Policies, 1993), 233-278. Tai-Li Hu, ‘The ethnic relations and identity of Taiwanese “veterans”’, in *The Ethnic Relations and National Identity*, ed. Chang, Mao-Kuei (Taipei: The Research Centre for National Policies, 1993), 279-325. Mao-Kuei Chang, ‘Taiwanese Political Transformation and the Process of Ethnic Politics’, in *Ethnic Politics and Policies*, ed. Shih, Cheng-Feng (Taipei: Avanguard, 1997), 37-71. Fu-Chang Wang, ‘Ethnic Consciousness, Nationalism and the Support for Party: Taiwan’s Ethnic Politics in 1990s’, *Taiwan Sociology* 2 (1998), 1-45. Fu-Chang Wang, ‘From Democratization to Ethnic Politics: The Development of Democratic Movements in Taiwan, 1970-1990’, in *The Development of Taiwanese Democracy in the 20th Century*, ed. Academia Historica (Taipei: Academia Historica, 2004), 535-590.

<sup>14</sup> Hsiao, *Reconstructing Taiwan*, 333.

<sup>15</sup> Jung-Chung Yeh, ‘Re-discussing the Third Literature’, *Nan-Yin* 1 (9), 1 (10) (1932). Ming-Hui Shih, ([1984] 1988) ‘The debate on Taiwan consciousness in the island’, in *The Collecting Papers of the Debate on Taiwan Consciousness*, ed. Ming-Hui Shih (Taipei: Avanguard, [1984] 1988), 1-18. Fang-Ming Chen, ‘A Mainstream Research Field: Taiwan Research’, in *Searching for Taiwan History View*, ed. Fang-Ming Chen (Taipei: Independence Evening Post, 1992a), 3-9. Fang-Ming Chen, ‘Towards the Building of Taiwan Historical View’, in *Searching for Taiwan Historical View*, ed. Fang-Ming Chen (Taipei: Independence Evening Post, 1992b), 11-25. Hsiao, *Return to Reality*. Hsiao, *Reconstructing Taiwan*.

colonial experiences play a core role in showing the emergence of Taiwanese nationalism and Taiwanese identity under Japanese rule.<sup>16</sup>

Over the past 40 years, studies of Taiwanese history have shown an interest in interpreting the connotations of 'Taiwanese consciousness' and developing the independence of Taiwanese history from the framework of Chinese history. Many pioneering historians such as Chin-Jen Cheng (鄭欽仁) (1983), Yen-Hsien Chang (張炎憲) (1993; 1995) and Mi-Cha Wu (吳密察) (1994) all suggest that establishing the independence of Taiwanese history is a requisite for the confirmation of Taiwanese consciousness and Taiwanese subjectivity.<sup>17</sup> The most important objective of Taiwanese history, according to Mi-Cha Wu, 'is to analyse and interpret Taiwanese nationalism'.<sup>18</sup> Compared to the old Chinese national imagination in which Taiwan had been considered as a local area of China, Taiwanese history redefines the status of Taiwan and transforms the boundaries of the national imagination from the whole of Mainland China to Taiwan Island and the people who live there. The attempts to search for the origins of Taiwanese consciousness and establish Taiwanese subjectivity over the past four decades has accorded Taiwanese history the status of 'national history' rather than existing as an auxiliary part of Chinese history.<sup>19</sup>

It is in this sense that this study will examine Taiwanese history in the context of

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<sup>16</sup> Mi-Cha Wu, 'The Establishment and Issues of Taiwan History', *Contemporary Monthly* 100 (1994), 78-97. Edward Wang, *Fifty Years of Taiwanese Historiography: 1950-2000* (Taipei: Rye Field Publishing Company, 2002). Tsui-Lien Chen, *The Resistance and Identity of Taiwanese People: 1920-1950* (Taipei: Yuan-Liou, 2008).

<sup>17</sup> Chin-Jen Cheng, 'The research on Taiwan history and the review of Taiwanese consciousness', *Taiwanese Literature* 84 (1983), 7-17. Yen-Hsien Chang, 'The New Spirit of Taiwan History Research', *Taiwan Historical Materials Studies* 1 (1993), 76-86. Yen-Hsien Chang, 'The Questions and Reflections of Taiwan History', *Newsletter of the Taiwan Historical Association* 1 (1995), 7-8. Wu, 'The Establishment and Issues of Taiwan History', 78-97.

<sup>18</sup> Wu, 'The Establishment and Issues of Taiwan History', 92.

<sup>19</sup> Wang, *Fifty Years of Taiwanese Historiography*. Yung-Ho Tsao, 'Another approach of Taiwanese historical study: the concept of the history of Island of Taiwan', *Newsletter of Taiwan History Field Research* 15 (1990), 7-9.



Taiwanese nationalism and hypothesise that the development of Taiwanese history not only provides an alternative discourse to Kuomintang's Chinese history, but also a new national history for a possible future independent Taiwanese nation. As a national museum interpreting and displaying Taiwanese history, – a new national history – the argument developed in this study is based on the assumption that the establishment of the NMTH aims to present the development of the specific *Bentuhua* ideology and shape a new Taiwanese national identity through displaying this new national history.

## ***2. Museum studies, national museums and contemporary Taiwanese society***

Studies on national museums in Taiwan traditionally centre on interpreting how the museum acts as the agent of state political power in propagating specific political ideologies and crafting the national imagination. Under the authoritarian rule of the Kuomintang government before *Bentuhua* and political democratisation in the 1970s, as Wei-I Lee (李威宜) points out, the main aim of Taiwan's national museums was to present Kuomintang's political elite's Chinese cultural and national imagination. In this sense, national museums such as the National Palace Museum (國立故宮博物院) and the National Museum of History (國立歷史博物館) had been established for displaying Chinese material culture and served the political purpose of transplanting Chinese national identity into Taiwan and educating the Taiwanese: to learn to be Chinese.<sup>20</sup> In surveying the changing relationships between the state and museums

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<sup>20</sup> Wei-I Lee, 'The construction of National Imaginaries in Taiwan's museums during the de-colonization and cold war eras (1945-1971)', in *Museums, Knowledge Construction and*

in Taiwan, Chi-Jung Chu (朱紀蓉) also suggests that state power has always been the guiding principle for the Taiwanese government to build national museums. Influenced deeply by national cultural policies, it is suggested that the functions of Taiwan's national museums not only reflect important public issues, but also display a particular political language, national imagination and national identity.<sup>21</sup>

With growing attention given to multiculturalism and ethnic diversity since the 1990s, the public role of Taiwan's national museums has been transformed to present a diverse Taiwanese culture and ethnicity rather than reflecting a homogeneous national imagination. Owing to the Aboriginal movements which strove for ethnic autonomy and name rectification in the 1990s, Kuomintang's policies of ethnic assimilation were gradually adjusted to those of multiculturalism.<sup>22</sup> In 1993, the Democratic Progress Party published the *White Paper of Ethnic Policies* (族群政策白皮書) in which the Democratic Progress Party advocated that 'in the prerequisite of ethnic equality and ethnic inclusion, in Taiwan there at least exist Indigenous peoples, *Hoklo* (福佬人), *Hakka* (客家人), and *Waishengren* [...] The traditional discrimination of original domicile should not exist within the framework of this modern ethnic relationship'.<sup>23</sup> The address of the new ethnic discourse of 'Four Ethnic Groups' (四大族群) shows on the one hand that the definition of 'Taiwanese people' has been

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*Modernity*, ed. Song-Shan Wang (Taichung: National Museum of Natural Science, 2005). Wei-I Lee, 'The science and politics of collecting: the interpretation of the shaping of Taiwanese post-war totalitarian ruling and the exercise of power', in *The Culture and Science of Museums' Collection*, ed. Song-Shan Wan (Taipei: National Taiwan Museum, 2010), 49-67.

<sup>21</sup> Chi-Jung Chu, *The changing relationship between the state and museums: a case study of Taiwan (1908-2008)* (unpublished PhD thesis, 2010). Chi-Jung Chu, 'Political change and the national museum in Taiwan', in *National Museums: New Studies From Around the World*, ed. Simon J. Knell, Peter Aronsson, et al. (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), 180-192. Chi-Jung Chu, 'The national forces in the development of national museums: the discussion on Taiwanese experiences', in *Museology Quarterly* 28 (1) (Taichung: National Museum of Natural Science, 2014), 5-29.

<sup>22</sup> Wakabayashi, *The Progress of the Taiwanisation*, 388-406.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 406.

expanded and on the other hand the dramatic ideological opposition between *Benshengren* and *Waishengren*, between Chinese nationalism and Taiwanese nationalism, could possibly be weakened by these new ethnic relationships.

It is in this context that displaying ethnic diversity, and especially Taiwanese Indigenous Peoples, has become a new current of Taiwan's museums. Regarding the processes of the redefinition of Taiwanese national and cultural identities since the lifting of Martial Law in 1987. Marzia Varutti argues that 'The refashioning of Taiwanese cultural identity in multicultural terms, together with the re-writing of Taiwanese history to include the history of indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities, are major, long-term projects undertaken by national museums in Taiwan'.<sup>24</sup> In examining the collaborative project of 'Big Museum Leads Small Museum' which aims to 'establish a platform for collaborations between mainstream national museums in Taiwan and local indigenous museums',<sup>25</sup> Varutti questions how much of a voice Taiwan's aborigines are allowed in helping indigenous museums 'set up new exhibitions to attract visitors and to inject new life in their activities'.<sup>26</sup>

In writing of the relationship between national power and the cultural rights of Indigenous peoples, Wei-I Lee and Mei-Fen Lu's (盧梅芬) studies present new ways of interpreting the public role of national museums in contemporary multicultural and poly-ethnic Taiwanese society. Concerning exhibitions of ethnicity, Lee argues that in contemporary multicultural-guided national museums in post-totalitarian

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<sup>24</sup> Marzia Varutti, 'Towards social inclusion in Taiwan: museums, equality and indigenous groups', in *Museums, Equality and Social Justice*, ed. Richard Sandell and Eithne Nightingale (London and New York: Routledge, 2012), 243-253.

<sup>25</sup> Marzia Varutti, 'Learning to share knowledge', in *Museums and Communities: Curators, Collections and Collaboration*, ed. Viv Golding and Wayne Modest (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 64.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.

Taiwan, the function of cultural representation should be enhanced to meet multicultural social needs for ‘protecting diverse public presentation’ in order to create museums as possible spaces for realising the ideal of social justice.<sup>27</sup> In investigating the public role of national museums in presenting multiculturalism, Lu suggests that Taiwanese national museums should be empowered to be ‘public forums’ or ‘contact zones’ for pluralistic discussions about national culture. The traditional presentation of ‘monistic national identity’ at national museums has gradually come to appear as an antiquated way of telling stories of Taiwan, whereas the concept of multicultural identity has become popular in contemporary Taiwan.<sup>28</sup>

Investigating the historical development of Taiwan’s national museums, it is suggested that the aim, features, functions and social concerns of Taiwan’s national museums reflect the ongoing progress of Taiwanese democratisation and *Bentuhua*. Displaying multi-cultural and ethnic diversity in museum spaces indicates that the de-centralised, inclusive and democratic Taiwanese historical narrative has been institutionalised and empowered as a national cultural discourse. Owing to the contribution of *Bentuhua*, the specific Taiwanese context can be framed, within which my case study of the NMTH provides a new particular situation for national museums around the world.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Wei-I Lee, ‘Reflections on the Exhibitions of Ethnicity: Observations from the Post-authoritarian Taiwan’, *Journal of Archaeology and Anthropology* 80 (2014), 221-250.

<sup>28</sup> Mei-Fen Lu, ‘From assimilation and the discourse of new nation-state on multiculturalism to review the relationships among national museums, national narrative and indigenous peoples’, *Museology Quarterly* 26 (3) (Taichung: National Museum of Natural Science, 2012), 111-131. Mei Fen Lu, ‘From separated world to us: how national museums can be the public forum of national culture’, paper presented in ICOM-INTERCOM & FIHRM 2014 Taipei Conference (2014).

<sup>29</sup> Simon Knell, ‘National museums and the national imagination’, in *National Museums: New Studies from around the World*, ed. Knell, *et al.*, 3-28.

### ***3. De-centralised historical narratives and visitors' meaning-making at museum spaces***

Taiwanese history displayed at the NMTH, and shaped within this unique Taiwanese context, is presented as a de-centralised historical narrative which empowers marginalised groups, such as aborigines, women and immigrants to participate in the making of history. Diverse and challenging viewpoints from different social groups form 'rival interpretations that ensure consensus cannot be established'.<sup>30</sup> In modern democratic and plural Taiwanese society, as Stefan Berger and Bill Niven indicate 'the more the official memorial culture of nations was challenged by diverse public memories coming from the midst of a highly diverse civil society, the more it became impossible to write a unitary history of national memory'.<sup>31</sup> In museums, the concept of 'challenging history' reminds researchers that the museum's power of interpretation is not always absolute and should be ready to accept challenges not only from different historical views but also from the individual visitor's perceptions or meaning-making activities.<sup>32</sup> It is important to bear in mind that 'communities, groups, visitors, societies, publics and constituencies, are heterogeneous and incongruent'.<sup>33</sup> The concept of the 'public' is also diverse and alive, so that an understanding of this heterogeneous public 'can help us to critique the modernist, traditionalist museum as a project of "nation", as celebratory in tone

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<sup>30</sup> Chris Lorenz, 'Representations of identity: Ethnicity, race, class, gender and religion. An introduction to conceptual history', in *The Contested Nation: Ethnicity, Class, Religion and Gender in National Histories*, ed. Stefan Berger and Chris Lorenz (Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 24-59.

<sup>31</sup> Stefan Berger and Bill Niven, 'Writing the history of national memory' in *Writing the History of Memory, London*, ed. Stefan Berger and Bill Niven (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2014), 135-156.

<sup>32</sup> Jenny Kidd, Sam Cairns, Alex Drago, Amy Ryall and Miranda Stearn, *Challenging History in the Museum: International Perspectives* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014).

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

and unifying in purpose'.<sup>34</sup>

In *Beyond the Glass Case: The Past, the Heritage and the Public in Britain* (1991), Nick Merriman argued that there exist cultural barriers between museums and the public. Ordinary people's ways of seeing, understanding and telling the past are very different from museums' ways. Merriman suggests that studying how people see the past beyond the walls of museums can provide professional and academic museum historian-authors with a more diverse understanding of the historical past. In order to meet diverse social needs, museums 'need to look at ways in which the past is experienced in non-museum ways to see what they teach us'.<sup>35</sup> Berger, Kidd and Merriman's critiques of the traditional, monolithic grand historical narrative, no matter whether in a historiographical or a museum context, can be regarded as the core foundation of my argument in this study.

Based on seeing the construction of historical narratives at the NMTH as a progress of de-centralisation, this study will consider both the professional ways of interpreting and displaying historical knowledge at the NMTH and non-professional visitors' ways of seeing the past. In respect of the museum's knowledge-shaping functions, this study argues that the NMTH transforms the academic achievements of Taiwanese historical research into the museum's historical narratives in which the diversity of Taiwanese history is represented in the museum's exhibitions. In respect of visitors' ways of telling the past, this study takes the approach of public history which suggests that everyone has their own contexts such as personal memories, life

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<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>35</sup> Nick Merriman, *Beyond the Glass Case: The Past, the Heritage and the Public* (London: UCL Institute of Archaeology, ([1991] 2000), 95.

experiences, ethnic, educational and cultural backgrounds in constructing individual meaning when facing the past.

The complex ways in which people use the past to make sense of themselves and their lives, as well as to negotiate the present and navigate the future. The past and the present are brought together in an analysis of the ways in which people made the past part of their everyday routines and turned to the past “as a way of grappling with profound questions about how to live.”<sup>36</sup>

It is critical that even the museum creates a story space, which implies the author’s specific epistemological, ethical, political and ideological choices,<sup>37</sup> as museum visitors have their own ways of interpretation in the forming of their understanding of the past, present and future. As Paul Martin puts it

Visitors are encouraged to make their own meaning from what they see, rather than assimilate pre-formatted data on labels. In this sense, the visitor is engaged in recasting or moulding new or personalized meanings for their visit. Such exhibitions provide honesty in the information, acknowledging gaps in historical understanding and explaining how exhibits came to be here. It also employs rhetorical questioning in order to invite a deeper probing by the viewer and to encourage a sense of their own meaning-making experience, rather than a predetermined authoritative one. Hence, as meaning is being made by the viewer, a contemporary history of how the material culture of the past is viewed in the present is also being made collectively by the audience.<sup>38</sup>

Through this process of meaning-construction, the museum’s power to shape

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<sup>36</sup> Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen, ‘The Present of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life’, in *The Public History Reader*, ed. Hilda Kean. and Paul Martin (New York: Routledge, [1998] 2013), 4.

<sup>37</sup> Alun Munslow, *Narrative and History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

<sup>38</sup> Paul Martin, ‘The past in the present: Who is making history?’ in *The Public History Reader*, ed. Kean, H. and P. Martin (New York: Routledge, 2013), 1-10.

historical discourse will be weakened, especially in a democratic and plural society like Taiwan.

Focusing on the intersections between personal memory, meaning-making and exhibition narrative at museum spaces, Chia-Li Chen's (陳佳利)<sup>39</sup> studies on museum visitors' memory processes and Wan-Chen Chang's (張婉真)<sup>40</sup> studies on the storytelling of museum exhibitions offer my study an alternative angle from which to investigate the interactions between museum exhibitions and museum visitors. Based on recognising museum visitors have the ability to make their own meaning when visiting museums, Chen and Chang conduct interviews with visitors in order to collect and analyse how non-professional museum visitors read museum texts and construct the past using memories and experiences. In this context, Chen interviews visitors to five Taiwanese local museums<sup>41</sup> in order to investigate how local museums, as repositories of memory, act as a conduit between visitors' individual memories and their local identities. Through analysing individual museum visitors' storytelling, Chen establishes the connections linking museum objects, historical spaces and personal memories in her study.<sup>42</sup> In Chang's study, she conducted interviews with museum visitors who visited the permanent exhibition of the NMTH, *Our Land, Our People: The Story of Taiwan* (斯土斯民：臺灣的故事). By

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<sup>39</sup> Chia-Li Chen, 'Museums and the shaping of cultural identities: visitors' recollections in local museums in Taiwan', in *Museum Revolutions: How Museums Change and are Changed*, ed. Simon J. Knell, Suzanne MacLeod and Sheila Watson (London and New York: Routledge, 2007a), 173-188. Chia-Li Chen, *Wound on Exhibition: Notes on Memory & Trauma of Museums* (Taipei: Artouch, 2007b).

<sup>40</sup> Wan-Cheng Chang, *The Narrative Turn of Contemporary Museum Exhibition* (Taipei: Yuan-Liou Publishing Company, 2014).

<sup>41</sup> The five local museums are the Bai-Mi Clog Museum (白米木屐館), the I-Lan Museum of Local Political Theory, now the Memorial Hall of Founding of Yilan Administration (宜蘭設治紀念館), the Taipei 228 Memorial Museum (台北二二八紀念館), the Peitou Hot Springs Museum (北投溫泉博物館) and the Hsinchu Municipal Glass Museum (新竹玻璃工藝博物館).

<sup>42</sup> Chen, 'Museums and the shaping of cultural identities', 173-188.



investigating visitors' reading behaviours and meaning-construction in the gallery space, Chang attempts to examine the efficiency of museum exhibitions as narrative-texts and meanwhile to understand how museum visitors, as ideal readers, interact with exhibition texts using their individual perception, meaning-making and emotions.<sup>43</sup> Taking a visitor-focused approach, both Chen and Chang's studies challenge overly simplistic readings of the relationship between state power and the museum in constructing historically-informed national identities; meanwhile they provide public viewpoints from museum visitors.

Taking museums and exhibitions as reading texts, this study proposes to use history as a changing and challenging narrative-making process. In the case of the NMTH, the making of Taiwanese history is the core through which I combine other Taiwanese contexts including Taiwanese democratisation, *Bentuhua*, Taiwanese nationalism, Taiwanese identity or even the independence of Taiwan. Focusing on interpreting the connotations of Taiwanese history, this study suggests that no matter its subjects, source materials or methodologies, Taiwanese history could be said to be 'new' compared to Chinese history, and is new for Taiwanese society.

With the development of political democratisation and multiculturalism, historical research in Taiwan has gradually changed its focus from academia to the general public. When facing the public, it is suggested that the concept of 'changing and challenging history' signifies that the development of the 'new' Taiwanese history presents not only the changing and broadening of historical research methods but also the fluid and continuing dialogue between professionals and ordinary people

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<sup>43</sup> Chang, *The Narrative Turn of Contemporary Museum Exhibition*.

when we understand history making as a personal practice in dealing with ‘questions about relationships, identity, immortality, and agency’.<sup>44</sup>

#### ***4. In-depth interviews with museum staff and museum visitors***

In order to present both the NMTH’s professional opinions of making Taiwanese history and non-professional people’s construction of the past, in this study I conduct interviews with two groups of interviewees. In keeping with the traditions of qualitative research, I aim for thick descriptions of the individual viewpoints, while also attempting to identify some general trends and significant patterns among them.

As a historical researcher without any prior relationship or conflicts of interest with the NMTH, it was possible for this research to analyse the NMTH from an objective perspective. In order to access the institution, I contacted a friend who works as a Research Assistant in the Public Service Division at the NMTH. Through the arrangement of and with permission from the Public Service Division, I made contact with the Research Division, Exhibition Division and the museum Director; meanwhile, I was able to secure access to the museum’s exhibition space for the interviews with visitors. Following the code of research ethics, before interviewing the museum staff, I sent an information sheet to all interviewees which provided information on who I was, the purpose of the research, the responsibilities of both parties and the role they would play in this research. Meanwhile, I also sent the interviewees the consent form through which they granted me permission to use their interview data in my thesis, either as named participants or anonymously.

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<sup>44</sup> Rosenzweig and Thelen, ‘The Present of the Past’ (1998), 30-55.

The first group of interviewees were museum professionals, including four curators from the Research and Exhibition Divisions and the present and former Director of the NMTH. The four curators and the former museum Director all agreed that I could use their spoken words in this thesis, whereas the present museum Director did not sign the consent form due to his sensitive institutional affiliation and instead asked me to quote what he has written in published works. Four main questions were designed for the two Divisions separately (See Appendices 1 and 2), largely centring on interviewees' working experiences and their professional opinions about academic research, exhibition design and the public roles of the NMTH in contemporary Taiwanese society. The interview data collected from museum staff will be used in this thesis not only to supplement the inadequacies of the documentary analysis but also to present a lively picture of the museum's 'backstage' preparation works.

The second group of interviewees were museum visitors who visited the permanent exhibition: *Our Land, Our People: The Story of Taiwan* at the NMTH. Before conducting the interviews in the exhibition gallery, the Public Service Division requested me to apply for permission to conduct research in the museum for one week. Due to the limitations of time, a total of 25 visitors were interviewed, which comprises the sample size of my visitor research data in this thesis. When I selected interviewees at random at the exit of the permanent exhibition, I also prepared a consent form and information sheet which not only provided enough information for museum visitor interviewees, but also acquired their consent to use their words in this thesis. Four questions were designed to invite visitors to share their individual

stories, including personal memories, nostalgic emotions and the degree to which they identified with Taiwan and its past (See Chapter 4). In contrast to the professional opinions of museum staff, the data collected from museum visitors will be used to analyse how visitors construct their own meaning in responding to the information provided by the museum. By presenting individual visitors' opinions and stories about the Taiwanese past, this study proposes to collect their visiting experiences and *what* the Taiwanese history and Taiwanese identity presented in the permanent exhibition mean to them.

In investigating the relationship between individual visitors' perceptions of the exhibition and personal narrative-making, German historian Jörn Rüsen's analysis of historical consciousness permits this study to make connections between visitors' past memories and present concerns. The shaping of individual historical consciousness is complex and concerned with both the internal workings of memory and the specific external social and cultural context, which form the prior knowledge visitors in interpreting the exhibition and making their own meaning. Empowering visitors to tell their individual story relating to the exhibition and displayed objects, this study proposes that narrative-making could be used as a tool for connecting past memories, present actuality and future perspectives.<sup>45</sup>

The in-depth interviews with museum visitors aim to present visitors' opinions in three aspects: (1) their new reading experiences of the NMTH's coherent historical narrative, (2) their memories and story-telling triggered by the exhibition, and (3) the

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<sup>45</sup> Jörn Rüsen, 'Historical consciousness: narrative structure, moral function, and ontogenetic development' in *Theorising Historical Consciousness*, ed. Peter Seixas (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 63-85. Jörn Rüsen, *History: Narration – Interpretation – Orientation* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2005).

NMTH's definition of Taiwanese identity. The incorporation of memory and narrative permits this study to explain the interplay between the self and society, between the past and the present and between individual experience and the generalised account. It will also offer emotional content, which written history has marginalised.

### ***Scope of the Research***

With these in mind, this study begins from the external context of *Bentuhua* to provide research backgrounds for both Taiwanese history and the NMTH. On the basis of the arguments that building independent Taiwanese history is imperative for establishing Taiwanese nationalism, Chapter 1 provides an overview of how Taiwanese history as a new national historical discourse establishes the uniqueness of Taiwan and Taiwanese peoples from Mainland China. Investigating the development of Taiwanese history in the historical context of Taiwanese political democratisation and *Bentuhua* movements, this chapter suggests that the 'Taiwanisation of the Republic of China' in the past 40 years not only stimulates the Kuomintang government to advance democratic reformation, but also forms a social atmosphere which allows Taiwanese nationalists to reimagine Taiwan as a new nation-state.<sup>46</sup> Since the 1990s when former President Deng-Hui Li (李登輝) had emphasised Taiwanese subjectivity and differentiated between Taiwan and Mainland China as two independent political substances, there has been a dramatic change in

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<sup>46</sup> Wakabayashi, *The Progress of the Taiwanisation*. Hsiao *Return to Reality*. Hsiao, *Reconstructing Taiwan*.

the national imagination from Chinese nationalism to Taiwanese nationalism. In the progress of *Bentuhua*, Taiwanese history has been established as an independent discipline from the framework of Chinese history. Taiwanese history plays a crucial role in shaping Taiwan as a new imagined community on the intellectual basis of 'Taiwanese consciousness' and 'Taiwanese subjectivity'.<sup>47</sup>

In challenging the traditional Kuomintang government's master narrative dominated by Chinese Han-centred cultural hegemony, Taiwanese history has been attempting to include more diverse viewpoints and historical insights to broaden the research scope for defining the composition of actors who shape Taiwanese identity past and present. Contributed to by modern Western historical traditions and the rise of multiculturalism, the new Taiwanese history has established its disciplinary features not only to rediscover marginalised or forgotten history in China-centred national history,<sup>48</sup> but has also dedicated itself to pay more attention to cultural equality in contemporary Taiwanese society<sup>49</sup>.

Chapter 2 begins with the issue of 'plural national identity in contemporary Taiwan' by illustrating the negotiation of identities in this island and attempting to answer the question of *why* Taiwanese society needs a new national museum of Taiwan history. Focusing on the question of 'who are the central actors of national histories?',<sup>50</sup> the

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<sup>47</sup> Cheng, 'The research on Taiwan history', 7-17. Chang, 'The New Spirit of Taiwan History Research', 76-86. Chang, 'The Questions and Reflections of Taiwan History', 7-8. Chang, 'The original domicile and nationalism'. Wu, 'The Establishment and Issues of Taiwan History'.

<sup>48</sup> Nai-Te Wu, 'Transitional Justice and Historical Memories: The Uncompleted Works of Taiwan Democratisation', *Reflection* 2 (2006), 1-34. Nai-Te Wu, 'Writing National Trauma: The Historical Memory of the 228 Incident', *Thinking Monthly Magazine* 8 (2008), 39-70.

<sup>49</sup> Lung-Chih Chang, 'The Search for the Lost Tribes of Formosa: Reflections on the Historical Study of Taiwan Plains Aborigines', in *One Hundred Years of Taiwan History Research: Reflection and Research*, ed. Fu-San Huang, Wei-Ying Ku and Tsai-Hsiu Tsai (Taipei: The Preparatory Office of the Institute of Taiwan History, Academia Sinica, ([1995] 1997), 257-272.

<sup>50</sup> Stefan Berger, 'The comparative history of national historiographies in Europe: Some methodological reflections and preliminary results', in *Nations and Their Histories: Constructions and*

crucial question that Chapter 2 proposes to answer is how do we redefine the connotations of the term ‘Taiwanese people’? In Chapter 2, this study suggests that Taiwan has experienced three phases of identity transformation which are the original domicile opposition, the Four Ethnic Groups (四大族群) and self-defining plural national identity. With the broadening of the connotations of the term ‘Taiwanese people’, the historical actors of Taiwanese history and Taiwanese identity have gradually become more inclusive and have reserved more open spaces for public discussion.

With the reconstitution of national imagination, national museums in Taiwan have begun to display Taiwanese multi-ethnicity and are dedicated to establishing national museums as contact zones for diverse voices.<sup>51</sup> Within this general current, the NMTH is significant for Taiwanese society in building a single museum displaying holistic Taiwanese history and related contemporary social issues. Reflecting the contemporary plural understanding of identity, the NMTH offers a sphere for public discussion and power negotiation among different social groups in Taiwan.

The discussion of Taiwanese historical research and the shaping of plural national identity provides my intellectual research contexts for analysing the institution itself. By surveying the museum’s documents and interviewing museum staff, Chapter 3 aims to present the museum’s professional opinions of the design and display politics of the NMTH’s permanent exhibition *Our Land, Our People: The Story of Taiwan*, in dealing with how the NMTH transforms academic Taiwanese historical research

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*Representations*, ed. Susana Carvalho and François Gemenne (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 29-45.

<sup>51</sup> Lu, ‘From separated world to us’.

into the museum's historical narratives.

Displaying Taiwan in the framework of world history, *Our Land, Our People* tells both Taiwanese people and international society that Taiwan is an immigrant society in which different ethnic groups interact with each other.<sup>52</sup> The diverse composition of 'Taiwanese people' in contemporary Taiwanese society forms the cornerstone of the sense of identity transmitted by the NMTH. Following the open-ended and self-defining identity with the land of Taiwan island, it is suggested that the NMTH as a museum for people, aims to construct not only a coherent historical narrative from the perspective of ordinary people but also concerns itself with challenging viewpoints from the communities.

Instead of the original theme-based gallery design in the preparatory phase, the final exhibition design of *Our Land, Our People* represents Taiwanese history in a chronological and coherent gallery space. Compared to the fragmentary and exam-oriented historical education in schools, a coherent and comprehensive museum historical narrative offers an ideal and complete text-reading environment for museum visitors.<sup>53</sup> Seeing the NMTH as an author, the permanent exhibition as a text and museum visitors as readers, Chapter 4 draws upon in-depth interviews with museum visitors who visited the permanent exhibition in order to present their reading and meaning-making behaviours in the gallery space. By presenting individual visitor's opinions which respond to the exhibition, the main aim of Chapter 4 is to provide a comparison between professional opinions offered by

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<sup>52</sup> Tsao, 'The concept of the history of Island of Taiwan', 7-9. Also see Yung-Ho Tsao, *The Sequel of the Research on Early Taiwan History* (Taipei: Linking Books, 2000).

<sup>53</sup> Chang, *The Narrative Turn of Contemporary Museum Exhibition*.



museum staff and non-professional opinions from museum visitors. Empowering museum visitors to act not only as readers but also as narrators and meaning-makers, the in-depth interviews in Chapter 4 show that ordinary people, as historians, have their own ways of seeing, interpreting and valuing the past.<sup>54</sup>

In analysing visitors' reading behaviour and meaning-making processes in the gallery space, it is suggested that individual historical consciousness comprising personal memories, life experiences, social collective memories and historical education plays a crucial role when visitors respond to the exhibition text.<sup>55</sup> Seeing the interview data in the unique Taiwanese context of national identity, Chapter 4 indicates that owing to the transformation of historical education and national identity in past decades, there exist different types of historical consciousness between two generations. The identification of the importance of the generation gap for understanding the Taiwanese past and identifying Taiwan makes this study unique from other visitor studies in Taiwan. In conclusion, interviewing museum visitors not only offers a means of evaluating and critiquing the deployment of space and objects in *Our Land, Our People*, but also provides a means of reflecting upon what the Taiwanese past, present and future mean to visitors.

From the interviews with museum staff and museum visitors, this thesis shows that there are two main inadequacies of *Our Land, Our People*. Firstly, on the basis of the NMTH's inclusive and plural definition of 'Taiwanese people', there is an expectation that various groups of Taiwanese people should be able to see their own

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<sup>54</sup> Merriman, *Beyond the Glass Case*. Lois H. Silverman, 'Visitor meaning-making in museums for a new age', *Curator* 38 (3) (1995), 161-70. George E. Hein, *Learning in the Museum* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998). Chen, 'Museums and the shaping of cultural identities'. Chang, *The Narrative Turn of Contemporary Museum Exhibition*.

<sup>55</sup> Rüsen, 'Historical consciousness'.

history in the exhibition. However, in this new presentation of Taiwanese history, the historical culture of Han-immigrants, especially the *Mingnan* (閩南) group, occupies the largest part of the exhibition. Other Taiwanese ethnic groups such as Indigenous peoples, *Waishengren*, *Hakka* and new immigrants are still marginalised or mentioned less often in the exhibition. Secondly, compared to the detailed presentation of the formation of Han society in the Qing Dynasty and Taiwanese modernisation in the Japanese colonial period, many important contemporary incidents in the post-war period, which constitute the living experiences or childhood memories of most visitors are narrated only briefly.

In order to supplement the inadequacies of the permanent exhibition, the issue-based special exhibitions are curated not only to present the historical culture of minority groups, but also to offer historical interpretation of contemporary issues. In Chapter 5, two special exhibitions are analysed, illustrating how the NMTH deals with contemporary issues in the context of multicultural Taiwanese society. Rooted in NMTH's abundant studies on *Pingpu* tribes in Southern Taiwan and the Taiwanese context of the 'Ethnic Revitalisation Movements' (族群復振運動) since the 1990s, *Seeing Pingpu: The History and Culture of the Plains Indigenous Peoples in Taiwan* (看見平埔:臺灣平埔族歷史與文化特展) rediscovers the marginalised history of *Pingpuzu* and empowers the people of the *Pingpu* tribes to voice their history for themselves in order to provide diverse viewpoints which challenge traditional Han-centred historical narratives. *Movement of People: The Migration Stories in Taiwan* (來自四方:近代臺灣移民的故事特展) concerns the stories of four migrant groups of people: Foreign missionaries, *Dachen* People (大陳人), Indigenous

people in cities and new female immigrants. By presenting migration stories of contemporary Taiwan, the exhibition re-emphasises the core concept of the museum's Taiwanese history – the feature of an immigrant society.

The two special exhibitions analysed in Chapter 5 show that when curating a special exhibition, there are three principles guiding the selection of issues, the politics of display and the making of stories. These are, firstly, decentralising the singular master narrative and empowering the main actors to tell their own history. Secondly, this involves caring about the needs of different groups of people in order to enable their voices to be heard in the public space of the museum. Last but not least, all the special exhibitions tackle and respond to specific contemporary social issues. Presenting historical interpretations for contemporary Taiwanese social issues at the NMTH reveals that the function of historical narrative is not only to narrate the past but also to provide guidance for the present and imagination for the future.

## Chapter 1

### Towards a New History

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#### *Taiwanese History: A new national discourse*

The National Museum of Taiwan History must display a kind of Taiwan history, which emphasises diverse ethnic groups, diverse culture, and self-identifies an immigrant nation formed by constitutional democratic principles. Therefore, the National Museum of Taiwan History will not be a museum of merely displaying historical antiques or local culture. The National Museum of Taiwan History must conform to the spirit of the age and its national narrative must respond to the Taiwanese people's need for identity: A nation with diverse ethnic groups, which is built according to a constitutional democratic principle. This historical narrative will see Taiwan as a geographical area and assimilate different ethnic groups' (including native and immigrants) experiences and culture.<sup>56</sup>

In talking about the philosophical principles of the NMTH, the first director, Mi-Cha Wu, indicates that the NMTH is a political and social product, which reflects important new ideas such as 'diverse ethnic groups', 'immigrant nation', 'identity' and 'constitutional democratic principles' which have emerged in the past few decades in Taiwan. It is suggested that with the development of political democratisation and *Bentuhua* in the past forty years, Taiwanese history, as a hybrid expert knowledge, has become a new national discourse which has been empowered governmentality in providing a new way of understanding the past, valuing the present and planning the future of this island and the people who live here. Representing this historical discourse in the museum's public sphere, the NMTH is the first national museum that

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<sup>56</sup> Mi-Cha Wu, 'Constructing a Museum of National History' in *Objects, Heritage and Cultural Identity*, ed. Hao-Fang Mei, Liang-Kai Chou (Nantou: Taiwan Historica, 2009), 291.

bears the political mission of transmitting a new multi-cultural national identity to the people and responding to Taiwanese political and social needs for a new identity.

In *Archaeology Theory and the Politics of Culture* (2004), Laurajane Smith uses Michel Foucault's perspective of 'governmentality' to deal with the role of archaeology, as an authorised Western expertise, in the governance and regulation of Indigenous people's cultural identity in the USA and Australia. Smith considers that archaeology, as an important expertise for the government in preserving, managing and interpreting cultural heritage is embroiled in complex social issues that involve the contestation of power/knowledge relations between colonial governments and Indigenous communities.<sup>57</sup> Tony Bennett also writes about how historical science, as a synthetic knowledge combining archaeology, geology and ethnology becomes 'governmentality' in the calculation and management of past knowledge within the new form of cultural governance: museums.<sup>58</sup> The meaning of 'governmentality', as Foucault referred to it is 'the ensemble formed by the institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, the calculations and tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific albeit complex form of power'.<sup>59</sup> Unlike the art of government concerned with territory and princes' principalities, the new form of the art of government which emerged during the eighteenth century is a 'whole complex of *savoirs*'; that is, a new technology of government whose object is to deal with all those concerns relating to population.<sup>60</sup> It has been suggested that in developing a national narrative, history, as form of expert knowledge, enters the political arena and becomes part of the

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<sup>57</sup> Smith, *Archaeological Theory*, 3.

<sup>58</sup> Tony Bennett, *Pasts Beyond Memory: Evolution, Museums, Colonialism* (London: Routledge, 2004).

<sup>59</sup> Foucault, 'Governmentality', 102.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 103.

technology of governance in the shaping of cultural identity. History, as a technology of governance, becomes a ‘social narrative with a practical purpose’ in which the past is not static but ‘changeable, a vital and important dimension of the life of any community’.<sup>61</sup> History in national museums, as ‘a complex of *savoirs*’ ‘must and does become embroiled in social and cultural debates about the past and its meaning for the present’.<sup>62</sup>

Interpreting Taiwanese history as a new expertise, the main purpose of this chapter is to examine the nature of Taiwanese history – the concepts and methods of a new ‘national history’, and to see how the new Taiwan-centred historical discourse presents a contesting and challenging history to the traditional Chinese-centred master narratives. In dealing with the questions of *why* Taiwanese society needs a new national history, *what* Taiwanese history is and *how* Taiwanese history has been constructed, the NMTH, as the kernel of the intellectual network of Taiwanese history, using various new historical methods, new historical source materials and a new historical outlook in collecting, researching, displaying and teaching Taiwanese history for the public, provides a starting point in understanding the concerns of Taiwanese history in contemporary Taiwan for my discussion.

The core works that the NMTH has dedicated to proceed from its preparation phase, according to the *Annual Report of the National Museum of Taiwan History 2012* (國立台灣歷史博物館年表 2012 年) (2014) are listed as:<sup>63</sup>

1. Investigating and studying overseas historical materials that are related to

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<sup>61</sup> David Carr, *Time, Narrative, and History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 132.

<sup>62</sup> Smith, *Archaeological Theory*, 3.

<sup>63</sup> National Museum of Taiwan History, *The Annual Report of the National Museum of Taiwan History 2012* (Tainan: National Museum of Taiwan History, 2013a), 29-39.

Taiwan.

2. Applying modern public history, mainly people's viewpoints beyond master historical narratives.
3. The interdisciplinary studies on Southern Taiwan.
4. Studying the museum's collections to create a new research area for Taiwanese history.
5. Studying comprehensively historical maps in order to establish geographic historical knowledge.
6. Publishing relative historical materials.

From this outline of the museum's research activities, it is clear that the shaping of historical knowledge in the NMTH is conducted on the basis of the search for new historical materials and a focus on a diverse history marginalised in the traditional master narratives.

The permanent exhibition, *Our Land, Our People: The Story of Taiwan* (斯土斯民：台灣的故事) provides a good example which presents the research achievements of the NMTH as well as how the museum uses diverse historical materials and viewpoints to challenge the traditional univocal master narrative. The characteristics of the exhibition, as the Annual Report tells as:

The history presented in this exhibition space applies an amount of historical materials and evidences about ordinary people, ethnic groups, women, and foreigners that are excluded from traditional official history. This story empowers these marginalised groups and attempts to construct the interaction between people and land. The exhibition provides visitors with the impulse of new viewpoints and lets visitors rediscover themselves by knowing the panorama of the Taiwanese past. The exhibition also attempts to make visitors understand and identify Taiwanese diverse historical culture and achieves the aim of creating a coherent society.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

The empowerment of ordinary people to be represented in historical narratives illustrates how Taiwanese history presents a different approach from the traditional Chinese national history. Following the approach of writing de-centralised history, Taiwanese history rediscovered historical memories that were marginalised or forgotten under the Kuomintang's political and cultural hegemony and the dominance of the Chinese national narrative that the Kuomintang government used in building Chinese identity in Taiwan.

After the Kuomintang regime lost the Chinese civil war (1945-1949) and relocated to Taiwan in 1949, the fight for the legitimate representation of China in international society between two regimes, the Republic of China (Taiwan) and the People's Republic of China, has become an important political issue of Kuomintang's rule in Taiwan. For the Kuomintang government, in order to emphasise its orthodox inheritance of the regime of China, 'the pressing issue was how to draw support from a hostile native population for its military campaign of recovering the Mainland China'.<sup>65</sup> Kuomintang's ruling policies of building Chinese identity in Taiwan meant that Taiwanese people who had already experienced long-term Japanese colonial dominance, now faced a new situation: to 'learn to be Chinese'.<sup>66</sup> Under the Kuomintang's control of the national historical narrative, Taiwan had been incorporated into the long history of China and was marginalised as a local history

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<sup>65</sup> Fu-Chang Wang, 'Why Bother about School Textbooks? An Analysis of the Origin of the Disputes Over *Renshi Taiwan* Textbooks in 1997', in *Cultural, Ethnic, and Political Nationalism in Contemporary Taiwan Bentuhua*, ed. John Makeham (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 58.

<sup>66</sup> Tsui-Lien Chen, *The Resistance and Identity of Taiwanese People: 1920-1950* (Taipei: Yuan-Liou, 2008).



whose main object was to build historical connections between Taiwan and China.<sup>67</sup> China-centred history taught Taiwanese people (including *Benshengren*, *Waishengren* and indigenous groups) as though they were ‘Chinese’ following the Kuomintang government’s Chinese national imagination.<sup>68</sup> The national imagination required Taiwanese people to accept Chinese national identity, which was essential to the survival of Kuomintang’s regime.<sup>69</sup> The Kuomintang government, as a history-shaping body, used history as a part of the ‘technology of governance’ to incorporate Taiwan’s plural ethnic cultures into the single framework of China and restrict the development of a Taiwanese-specific ‘self-identity’.<sup>70</sup> In this historical context, Taiwanese historical uniqueness, geographical meanings and the construction of Taiwanese experiences were ignored under national-sanctioned ‘Chinese’ national narratives.<sup>71</sup>

The transformation of national identity from Chinese to Taiwanese is a long progress due to the developments of political democratisation and cultural *Bentuhua* since the 1970s. Before the emergence of a Taiwanese local consciousness in the 1970s, the Kuomintang’s educational and political propaganda influenced the whole post-war generation; no matter if they were *Waishengren* or *Benshengren*, all had a solid Chinese cultural identity and considered themselves as Chinese.<sup>72</sup> With the opposition

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<sup>67</sup> Hao Fang, *The Concise History of Taiwan Nationalist Movements* (Taipei: Cheng Chung Bookstore, 1951). Tin-I Kuo, *The Outline of Taiwan History* (Taipei: Cheng Chung Bookstore, 1954). Chi-Nan Chen, *Traditional Chinese Society in Taiwan* (Taipei: Asian Culture, 1987). Yen-Hsien Chang, ‘The New Spirit of Taiwan History Research’, *Taiwan Historical Materials Studies* 1 (1983), 76-86.

<sup>68</sup> Mao-Kuei Chang, ‘The original domicile and nationalism’, in *The Ethnic Relations and National Identity*, ed. Mao-Kuei Chang (Taipei: The Research Centre for National Policies, 1993), 254.

<sup>69</sup> Wang, ‘Why Bother about School Textbooks?’, 55-99.

<sup>70</sup> Chang, ‘The original domicile and nationalism’, 241.

<sup>71</sup> Mao-Kuei Chang, ‘Taiwanese Political Transformation and the Process of Ethnic Politics’, in *Ethnic Politics and Policies*, ed. Cheng-Feng Shih (Taipei: Avanguard, 1997), 37-71.

<sup>72</sup> A-Chin Hsiau, *Return to Reality: Political and Cultural Change in 1970s Taiwan and the Postwar Generation* (Taipei: Institute of Sociology, Academia Sinica, 2010), 103.

to the Kuomintang's '*Waishengren* regime' since the 1980s, the recovery of local culture and the search for the historical origins and new meanings of the term 'Taiwanese' had stimulated the development of 'contemporary Taiwanese cultural nationalism' in which the reconstruction of Taiwanese history plays an important role.<sup>73</sup> This new Taiwan-centred historical narrative can be considered as the 'rediscovery and recreation of self-consciousness'<sup>74</sup> and constitutes an alternative national discourse that emphasises people's stories within the geographical boundary of Taiwan's Island.<sup>75</sup>

In surveying the birth and development of Taiwanese history, I propose that the concept of the 'Taiwanese nation' and the idea of 'Taiwanese nationalism' are constructed by historian-narrators who use history as constructed discourses in identifying national uniqueness. In this sense, the making of a new text of the national imagination can be regarded as the main purpose of the construction of Taiwanese history. As Anthony Smith argued nationalism exists 'as an ideological movement for attaining and maintaining autonomy, unity and identity on behalf of a population deemed by some of its members to constitute an actual or potential nation'.<sup>76</sup> For the constructors of Taiwanese history, shaping a Taiwanese national narrative constitutes an ideological movement, whose movement is to build a potential Taiwanese nation and nation-state. This process of reconstructing the Taiwanese past can be regarded as a process of constructing 'an imagined political community' through 'print-languages'

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<sup>73</sup> A-Chin Hsiau, 'Nationalism and Taiwanese Local Literature in the 1970s: A Discussion on the Transformation of Cultural Collective Memories', in *Taiwan History Research*, 6 (2), (2010), 77-138. Hsiau, *Return to Reality*. A-Chin Hsiau, *Reconstructing Taiwan: The Cultural Politics of Contemporary Nationalism* (Taipei: Linking Books, 2012).

<sup>74</sup> Chang, 'The original domicile and nationalism', 257.

<sup>75</sup> Yung-Ho Tsao, 'Another approach of Taiwanese historical study: the concept of the history of Island of Taiwan', in *Newsletter of Taiwan History Field Research*, 15, (1990), 7-9.

<sup>76</sup> Anthony Smith, *National Identity* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1991), 73.

in the process of Taiwanese democratisation and *Bentuhua* movements.<sup>77</sup>

In dealing with this issue, Chien-Jung Lu's (盧建榮) (1999) analysis on the making of national imagination in post-war Taiwanese novels and A-Chin Hsiau's (蕭阿勤) (2010; 2012) research on 'contemporary Taiwanese cultural nationalism' argue that in Taiwan, the making of 'print-language', including the writing of novels, political propaganda and history has made major contributions to the shaping of a new national imagination: Taiwanese identity. Based on the premise of Taiwan's post-colonial condition, Lu applied Frantz Fanon and Homi Bhabha's 'post-colonialism' theory to explain the sources of a complex identity anxiety that is present in Taiwanese intellectual elites' 'historical representation'. According to Lu's argument, the historical narratives conveying various kinds of identities was 'the key to understand the Taiwanese post-colonial cultural phenomenon. Historical narratives had been used to propagate intellectual elites' historical consciousness and mobilise the society to join their political or cultural identity'.<sup>78</sup>

In dealing with the construction of national imagination in post-war Taiwanese novels, Lu suggested that since President Ching-Kuo Chiang (蔣經國) had launched political *Bentuhua* policies in 1975, the creation of the new meanings of 'Taiwan' had gradually formed contesting and challenging discourses for the traditional Chinese construction of national identity.<sup>79</sup> In this competing process, Taiwanese identity and the concept of 'ethnic integration' have gradually become the mainstream discourses in Taiwanese society, and meanwhile, the dominant power and influence of Chinese

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<sup>77</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, [1983] 2006), 4, 44-45. Hsiau, *Reconstructing Taiwan*.

<sup>78</sup> Chien-Jung Lu, *The ambivalence of national identity in Taiwan, 1975-1997* (Taipei: Rye Field Publishing Company, 1999).

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

national discourse has been gradually weakened in order that ‘only through memorising past unique experiences, the new generation *Waishengren* writers can bring China consciousness back. However, this is a purely historical issue rather than the guidance of the present or the reference to the future’.<sup>80</sup>

Similar to Lu’s research, A-Chin Hsiao also conducted a comprehensive investigation of the *Bentuhua* discourses of Taiwanese cultural elites (including writers, politicians and historians) during the period from the 1970s to the 1990s. He took a narrative identity approach to analyse these texts, and examined the transformation of the post-war Taiwanese cultural elites’ national identity within the context of Taiwan’s political, social and cultural development. In *Return to Reality: Political and Cultural Change in 1970s Taiwan and the Post-war Generation* (回歸現實：台灣一九七〇年代的戰後世代與文化政治變遷) (2010), Hsiao applied a generational study approach in analysing the common identity and actions of the same generational unit, and, went further to compare the identity-shaping of two sequential generations of cultural elites in the 1970s and 1980s. By comparing the differences in national imagination between two generations, Hsiao’s study presents a story of the transformation from Chinese identity to Taiwanese identity in this period.<sup>81</sup>

In another work, *Reconstructing Taiwan, the Cultural Politics of Contemporary Nationalism* (重構台灣：當代民族主義的文化政治) (2012), Hsiao went further to deal with the text-making of the Taiwanese national imagination in the context of *Bentuhua* during the 1980s and 1990s. In this latter work, Hsiao painted a picture of *Bentuhua* and argued that the cultural efforts of rediscovering Taiwanese local literature and

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<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 180.

<sup>81</sup> Hsiao, *Return to Reality*.

history in the 1970s had transformed into political use by *Dangwai* nationalist intellectuals. Through an examination of *Dangwai* discourse on Taiwanese identity, Hsiao concluded that the shaping of Taiwanese cultural nationalism did not abruptly appear after the 1980s, but was a continuing process in which the ‘search for Taiwanese local history and construction of local identity in the 1970s prepared intellectual resources for Taiwanese nationalist historical narratives after the 1980s and deeply influenced the development of the *Bentuhua* of national identity’.<sup>82</sup>

Lu and Hsiao’s research show that since the 1970s in Taiwan, there has been an intellectual and political inclination to construct the idea of ‘Taiwanese’ as a nation and of ‘Taiwan’ as an independent nation-state through ‘printed-language’. In the context of *Bentuhua* and Taiwanese nationalism, the reconstruction of Taiwanese history can be regarded as a process of ‘national imagination’ in which historians, as the main nationalist narrators, create an alternative national discourse whose cardinal spirit is represented by the ‘construction of Taiwanese consciousness’. As the intellectual basis of Taiwanese historical consciousness, the origin of the concept of Taiwanese consciousness can be traced back to Japanese colonial experiences. With the stimulation of democratic reformatations and *Bentuhua* since the 1970s, Taiwanese consciousness has been generally discussed in various kinds of public forums and forms a powerful influence in changing the national imagination of the Taiwanese people.

### ***Taiwanese consciousness as the intellectual basis of Taiwanese history***

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<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 5. Hsiao, *Reconstructing Taiwan*.

In 1971, the Republic of China (Taiwan) withdrew from the United Nations and lost its representative status of 'orthodox China'. Not long after this diplomatic frustration, the United States announced its intention to build an official diplomatic relationship with the People's Republic of China in 1979, signifying that international society recognised the legitimacy of the People's Republic of China while disclaiming the legitimacy of Kuomintang's regime in Taiwan.<sup>83</sup> This change in the international *status quo* forced the Kuomintang government and President Ching-Kuo Chiang (蔣經國) to face political reality and 'advance the *Bentuhua* politics to unite *Waishengren* and *Benshengren* in order to ease the ruling crisis from the diplomatic frustrations and then enhance the legitimate basis of Kuomintang's regime in Taiwan'.<sup>84</sup> With the advancement of *Bentuhua* politics, President Ching-Kuo Chiang promoted more *Benshengren* elites to the leading classes and increased the number of legislative seats to broaden the mass basis of the Kuomintang regime.<sup>85</sup> Although President Ching-Kuo Chiang's 'political revolution of Taiwanisation, the adjustment and compromise of Taiwan's political reality, was still limited in Chinese-centred principle and not involved in the essential change of national imagination',<sup>86</sup> Kuomintang's top-down political reforms and *Bentuhua* politics provided Taiwanese intellectuals with a favourable climate in which to rethink Taiwan's past, present and future and permitted

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<sup>83</sup> Chang, 'Taiwanese Political Transformation', 37-71. J. Bruce Jacobs, 'Taiwanization in Taiwan's Politics', in *Cultural, ethnic, and political nationalism in contemporary Taiwan bentuhua*, ed. John Makeham and A-Chin Hsiao (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 17-54. Hsiao, *Return to Reality*, 5. Hsiao, *Reconstructing Taiwan*. Masahiro Wakabayashi, *The Post-War Taiwan Political History: The Progress of the Taiwanisation of the Republic of China* (Taipei: National Taiwan University Press, 2014).

<sup>84</sup> Chang, 'Taiwanese Political Transformation', 50.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 37-71. Jacobs, 'Taiwanization in Taiwan's Politics', 17-54.

<sup>86</sup> Fu-Chang Wang, 'From Democratization to Ethnic Politics: The Development of Democratic Movements in Taiwan, 1970-1990', in *The Development of Taiwanese Democracy in the 20th Century*, ed. Academia Historica (Taipei: Academia Historica, 2004), 562.

*Dangwai*'s mass movements to oppose Kuomintang's one-party authoritarian rule in a more liberal political atmosphere.

During this important transitional period of Taiwanese society, the newly emerged revival between Chinese nationalism and Taiwanese nationalism generated a crucial question for any national history: what makes a nation unique? In answering this important question, Taiwanese nationalists constructed the discourse of 'Taiwanese consciousness' in considering whether Taiwanese people can be regarded as a nation and how this new nation could establish its own independent country, meanwhile emphasising Taiwanese uniqueness from China.<sup>87</sup>

In dealing with these questions, the main role of national history in defining the 'self' and 'others' offers an analytic model with which to write the story of resisting the suffering and repression from others.<sup>88</sup> As a colonised island dominated by a sequence of foreign powers, repression from foreign regimes and the sufferings of the Taiwanese people provide abundant source materials for the imagined community of the Taiwanese. Early in the 1930s, Taiwanese intellectuals had started to develop discourses for discussing Taiwanese uniqueness. Due to Taiwan's colonised status and its separation from Mainland China, Taiwanese intellectuals realised that the nature of the Taiwanese social group is rooted in its colonised status, which makes Taiwanese

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<sup>87</sup> Shih-Tao Yeh, 'The Introduction of the History of Taiwanese Local Literature', in *The A Tide* 14 (1977), 68-75. Fang-Ming Cheng, 'A Mainstream Research Field: Taiwan Research', in Fang-Ming Chen, *Searching for Taiwan History View* (Taipei: Independence Evening Post, 1992a), 3-9. Fang-Ming Cheng, 'Towards the Building of Taiwan Historical View', in Fang-Ming Chen, *Searching for Taiwan Historical View* (Taipei: Independence Evening Post, 1992b), 11-25. Mi-Cha Wu, 'The Establishment and Issues of Taiwan History', in *Contemporary Monthly* 100 (1994), 78-97. Chen, *The Resistance and Identity*. Hsiau, *Return to Reality*, 5. Hsiau, *Reconstructing Taiwan*.

<sup>88</sup> Stefan Berger, 'The comparative history of national historiographies in Europe: Some methodological reflections and preliminary results', in *Nations and Their Histories: Constructions and Representations*, ed. Susana Carvalho and François Gemenne (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 34.

Han people different from Chinese Han people.

The establishment of Taiwanese literature marks the first step in transforming local folk culture to high culture, which formed the basis for building a nation-state.<sup>89</sup> Jung-Chung Yeh (葉榮鐘, 1900-1978), editor of the literature magazine *Nan-Yin* (南音), addressed the concept of ‘the third literature’ through which Yeh proposed that Taiwan should establish its own unique literature on the basis of common Taiwanese social experiences.<sup>90</sup> Yeh suggested that the new Taiwanese literature should reflect the ‘unique culture and consciousness that were commonly shared by Taiwanese society in the Japanese period’. In this sense, Yeh had developed the concept of ‘Taiwaneseness’, which is different from ‘Chineseness’.<sup>91</sup> Taiwanese consciousness, as the influential Taiwanese writer and literature critic Shih-Tao Yeh (葉石濤) (1977) defined it, represents ‘the history of the repression and devastation of Taiwanese people, the so called “Taiwan consciousness” – the common experiences of Chinese people in Taiwan is nothing but the common experiences of colonised status and repression’.<sup>92</sup> Emphasising the common historical experiences of Taiwanese people, the ‘experiences of “anti-Japan” occupies the core of the construction of colonised Taiwanese collective memories and Taiwanese consciousness. Taiwanese consciousness plays a decisive role in shaping Taiwanese national identity and provides an intellectual resource for *Dangwai*’s political movements, *Bentuhua* and the writing of Taiwanese history’.<sup>93</sup>

In his influential article ‘Taiwanese Consciousness: The Cornerstone of *Dangwai*’s Democratic Movements’ (台灣意識—黨外民主運動的基石) (1983), Shu-Hung Chen

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<sup>89</sup> Ernst Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983).

<sup>90</sup> Jung-Chung Yeh, ‘Re-discussing the Third Literature’, in *Nan-Yin*, 1 (9), 1 (10), (1932).

<sup>91</sup> Hsiau, *Reconstructing Taiwan*, 103.

<sup>92</sup> Yeh, ‘The Introduction’, 69.

<sup>93</sup> Hsiau, *Reconstructing Taiwan*, 146.



(陳樹鴻), an important *Dangwai* writer, offered historical explanations for the emergence of Taiwanese consciousness. He suggested that the Japanese colonial government introduced capitalism and industrial revolutions to Taiwan and integrated Taiwan as a homogeneous social and economic community. Owing to the modern transformations brought about by colonial government, Taiwanese consciousness had been shaped and ‘the nationalist movements since the 1920s such as “Taiwan Cultural Association” (台灣文化協會), “Taiwan People’s Party” (台灣民眾黨), and “Taiwan peasant protestant movements” (台灣農民運動) represented the forming and consolidation of Taiwanese consciousness in the process of social integration’.<sup>94</sup> The new concept of Taiwan consciousness, as Chen told us, ‘had entered into the rhetoric of national discourse and made great influences on ‘literary *Bentuhua* and *Dangwai* democratic movements’.<sup>95</sup>

As a key element in building the new Taiwanese identity, Taiwanese consciousness had also been used to explain the emergence of Taiwanese nationalism. Similar to Chen’s argument, Mi-Cha Wu also saw the Japanese colonial government as a language-shaping body which ‘created a common language (Japanese language) in Taiwan. The Japanese language provided the conditions for the appearance of Benedict Anderson’s ‘printed capitalism’. Through the development of broadcasting, the spread of newspapers and written materials, the Japanese language, as the medium of communication, ‘created Taiwan as a homogeneous society’ which shaped the

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<sup>94</sup> Shu-Hung Chen, ‘Taiwanese Consciousness: The Cornerstone of *Dangwai*’s Democratic Movements’, in *The Collection of the Debates on Taiwan Consciousness*, ed. Ming-Hui Shih (Taipei: Avanguard, [1983] 1988), 193-194.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 194.

consciousness of the Taiwanese and the concept of the 'Taiwanese nation'.<sup>96</sup>

Taking a similar approach, Tsui-Lien Chen (陳翠蓮) in *Taiwanese Resistance and Identity 1920-1950* (台灣人的抵抗與認同 一九二〇～一九五〇) (2008) also suggested that the modernisation of Taiwan in the Japanese period, especially in terms of transportation construction and national (Japanese) language policy, shaped Taiwan as a homogeneous society and provided Taiwanese people with the 'basic conditions to establish modern consciousness of community'.<sup>97</sup> In dealing with the rise of Taiwanese consciousness and Taiwanese nationalism, Chen went a step further to examine political and social resistance movements against Japan which were caused by the unequal treatment of the Taiwanese in illustrating the essential racial differences between the 'self' and 'others'. Following Anderson's theory of the 'imagined community', Chen argued that

Japan took the mid nineteenth-century European official nationalism in governing colonies. Like other colonised people, Taiwanese people were excluded from the system of government. As a key factor in explaining the emergence of nationalism in colonies, the frustration of secular pilgrimage made Taiwanese intellectuals realise that although they were Japanese nationals in law, they were different from Japanese.<sup>98</sup>

The political movements striving for political autonomy since the 1920s accelerated the shaping of Taiwanese consciousness and Taiwanese identity for 'the realisation of unequal status in the Japanese period is the earliest ethnic consciousness in Taiwanese

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<sup>96</sup> Wu, 'The Establishment', 78-97.

<sup>97</sup> Chen, *The Resistance and Identity*, 19.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

history’.<sup>99</sup>

All of these arguments on the origins of Taiwanese consciousness focus on ‘the birth of a homogeneous community’ under Japanese colonial rule and see this newly-developed common consciousness as the embryo of Taiwanese nationalism. In this sense, Japan has been imagined as the enemy of Taiwanese nation and plays a key role in narrating the discrimination between ‘us’ and ‘others’. Shaped by the unique historical experiences of colonial rule, Taiwanese society had presented its differences with Chinese society.<sup>100</sup> From the discussion above, it is concluded that the spirit of Taiwanese consciousness is the spirit of resistance that is presented in the processes of colonisation and anti-colonisation.<sup>101</sup> Within the framework of the opposition between ‘repression’ from others and our ‘sufferings’, Japan is represented as an important model in explaining the birth of Taiwanese common consciousness.

The historical interpretation of the meaning of Taiwanese consciousness leads us back to think about the logical relations between Taiwanese consciousness and *Dangwai*’s political movements. At the threshold between the 1970s and the 1980s stands the revolutionary change in Taiwan: that Taiwanese cultural elites had begun to strive for political democratisation, national self-determination and equal political rights between *Benshengren* and *Waishengren*. In this *Bentuhua* period, the Taiwanese spirit of resistance had been transformed into a political tool for constructing the new national imagination. In 1979, *Dangwai* organised a mass movement to celebrate Human Rights Day in Kaohsiung City. The mass movement subsequently developed

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<sup>99</sup> Wakabayashi, *The Progress of Taiwanisation*, 44.

<sup>100</sup> Hsiao, *Return to Reality*, 147. Also see Chen, ‘Taiwan Research’, 3-9. Wu, ‘The Establishment’, 78-97. Edward Wang, *Fifty Years of Taiwanese Historiography: 1950-2000* (Taipei: Rye Field Publishing Company, 2002). Chen, *The Resistance and Identity*.

<sup>101</sup> Hsiao, *Reconstructing Taiwan*, 182-183.

into a large-scale conflict between the masses and the government. In this conflict, many important *Dangwai* leaders were arrested and charged with sedition.<sup>102</sup> The occurrence of the *Melidao* Incident (美麗島事件) stimulated *Dangwai*'s intellectuals and the public to pay more attention to the issues of Taiwanese democracy and national identity. Due to intense political changes, Taiwanese identity has gradually entered into the sphere of public discussion. The concept of Taiwanese consciousness promoted by *Dangwai*'s intellectuals had transformed in terms of its function and had been used to 'change Taiwanese people's collective memories in order that *Dangwai* could mobilise the mass and strive for their political support'.<sup>103</sup>

The *Melidao* Incident is a significant milestone for the development of Taiwanese history. Since the Incident, Taiwanese local consciousness has gradually been stressed and Taiwanese history has 'entered into a new stage in which the purpose of Taiwanese history is to rebuild the historical memories of Taiwanese people with Taiwanese local consciousness; meanwhile to construct Taiwanese national identity and establish Taiwanese national state'.<sup>104</sup> Taiwanese history in this period 'reflected intense inclination towards Taiwanese independence (*Taidu* 台獨) and presented the characters of national history'.<sup>105</sup>

Promoted and narrated by *Dangwai*'s writers, Taiwanese history as a new national discourse has been used as a political and ideological tool in challenging Kuomintang's one-party rule, asking for political engagement, building a new national identity and mobilising the Taiwanese people to resist Kuomintang's historical memories. After the

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<sup>102</sup> Wakabayashi, *The Progress of the Taiwanisation*, 179-180.

<sup>103</sup> Hsiau, *Reconstructing Taiwan*, 291-292.

<sup>104</sup> Wang, *Fifty Years of Taiwanese Historiography*, 156.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 156.

*Melidao* Incident, Taiwanese history, as the core of the new Taiwanese national discourse, has gradually been guided by the *Dangwai* and subsequent Democratic Progress Party's (DPP 民主進步黨) political purposes.

In the context of Taiwanese democratisation and *Bentuhua*, it is suggested that since the 1970s, Taiwanese consciousness and Taiwanese identity have attracted increasing public attention and have entered into different kinds of discourses. In order to meet the political, social and cultural needs of Taiwanese society, Taiwanese history has presented itself as a new Taiwan-centred national discourse in which Taiwanese consciousness and Taiwanese identity play crucial roles in imagining Taiwan as a new nation-state.

In 1997, the *Bentuhua* movement climbed to its peak when President Deng-Hui Li (李登輝, tenure of office 1988-2000) promoted Taiwanese subjectivity in his famous discourse of 'special state-to-state relationship' (特殊國與國關係；兩國論). On 9 July, 1999, in an interview with the *Deutsche Welle* (德國之聲), President Li answered the question of how to respond to the situation that 'Beijing (北京) sees Taiwan as a rebellious province'. Li said:

Since the amendment of the Constitution in 1991, we have defined the relationships between Taiwan and the Mainland China as a special state-to-state relationship. The new relationship between Taiwan and the Mainland China is not the relationship between a legitimate government and a rebellious group, or a central government and a local government, which is based on the One-China ideology.<sup>106</sup>

President Li's argument of the 'two independent states' enhanced both the sovereign

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<sup>106</sup> Li, (1999), cited in Wakabayashi, *The Progress of Taiwanisation*, 279.

status of the Republic of China (Taiwan) and the People's Republic of China. According to Li, Taiwan had been imagined as an independent country from China in reality and the traditional Kuomintang's 'one-China policy' had been amended. Although President Li's conversation is unofficial, it actually reflects the purpose of Taiwanese constitutional reforms since 1991 in emphasising the sovereignty of Taiwan.<sup>107</sup> Since Li transformed the official national discourse, the common consensus that Taiwan is an independent sovereignty rather than a local government within the framework of China has gradually developed. Through increasing the proportion of Taiwanese history in high school historical textbooks, Taiwanese history has been used to anchor the new Taiwanese national imagination for younger generations.<sup>108</sup>

### ***A new Taiwanese national imagination: Writing independent Taiwanese history***

Dominated by Kuomintang's official Chinese nationalism, Taiwanese history had been regarded as a local history within the framework of Chinese history while its independent status had not been established until the 1970s. Even though there were some non-academic works on Taiwan's history published overseas such as Yu-Te Wang's (王育德) *Taiwan: A Gloomy History* (台灣：苦悶的歷史) (1964) and Ming Shih's (史明) *The Four Hundred Years History of Taiwanese People* (台灣四百年史) (Japanese edition 1962, published in Chinese in 1980), for the solid dominance of the Kuomintang government's Chinese nationalism, 'the real emergence of academic

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<sup>107</sup> Wakabayashi, *The Progress of Taiwanisation*, 279-284.

<sup>108</sup> Fu-Chang Wang, 'National Imagination, Ethnic Consciousness and History: The Content and Contextual Analysis of the Controversy of *Renshi Taiwan* Textbooks', in *Taiwan Historical Research* 8 (2) (2001), 145-208.

Taiwan history is the phenomenon after the abrogation of the Martial Law in 1987 and shows the highly rise of Taiwan local consciousness'.<sup>109</sup>

In this early stage, academic historical research on Taiwan mainly focused on the interpretation of the historical connections between China and Taiwan. For example, historian Hao Fan's (方豪) *The Concise History of Taiwan Nationalist Movements* (台灣民族運動小史) (1951) tells the story of Taiwanese resistance movements against the Dutch Formosa until 1945. Through the discussion on resisting the Dutch and Japanese colonial regimes, Fang considered that the resistant spirit of Taiwanese Han people is in accordance with Chinese Han people's resistance to Western Imperialism in the past century. By connecting Taiwanese resistance movements with Chinese nationalist movements, Fang took the viewpoint of Chinese history to 'reconstruct the emotional connection between Taiwan and China'.<sup>110</sup> In *The Outline of Taiwanese History* (台灣歷史綱要) (1954), historian Ting-I Kuo (郭廷以) traced the origins of Taiwanese modernisation back to the Qing Dynasty and suggested that early in the Qing dynasty, Taiwan had experienced industrial and economic reformations which formed the basis of Taiwan's modernisation. By doing so, Kuo rationalises the connection between Taiwan and China and goes a step further to marginalise the importance of modern Japanese constructions.<sup>111</sup>

In contrast to traditional historical research on the interaction between Taiwan and China, the application of social science after the 1960s provides new historical insights into building models for research on Taiwan. In 1965, the symposium of *The status of*

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<sup>109</sup> Wang, *Taiwanese Historiography*, 97-98.

<sup>110</sup> Fang, in *Taiwan Nationalist Movements*. Yen-Hsien Chang, 'The New Spirit of Taiwan History Research', in *Taiwan Historical Materials Studies* 1 (1993), 81.

<sup>111</sup> Tin-I Kuo, *The Outline of Taiwan History* (Taipei: Cheng Chung Bookstore, 1954). Chang, 'The New Spirit', 81. Wang, *Taiwanese Historiography*, 99-100.

*Taiwan research in Chinese history* (台灣研究在中國史學上的地位) held by the National Taiwan University presented the argument that the significance of Taiwanese history is to supplement the inadequacy of Chinese history.<sup>112</sup> In this conference, sociologist Shao-Hsin Chen's (陳紹馨) paper 'Taiwan: The laboratory of Chinese social culture studies' (中國社會文化研究的實驗室：台灣) evidently defined the meaning of research on Taiwan. According to Chen's viewpoint, although it experienced Japanese colonial rule, Taiwan is still a part of China, and Taiwanese society is still a Chinese society.<sup>113</sup> In other words, in view of the similarities between Taiwanese Han society and Chinese Han society, Taiwan can be regarded as an epitome of China. In the building of social theories, Chen considered that as a simplified social structure, Taiwan is more convenient for researchers to use as a generalised sociological model in studying China.<sup>114</sup> Chen's viewpoint showed that Taiwanese research was not only a part of Chinese research, but also the product of social science developing in the United States. Within the international framework of the United States, 'Taiwan had been regarded as the base and laboratory in dealing with "Red China" (Communist China) through the integration of history and social science into a new interdisciplinary model'.<sup>115</sup>

Chen's research outlook opened a new field for researchers in defining the nature of Taiwanese society and Taiwanese history. Historian Kuo-Chi Li's (李國祁) theory of 'inland assimilation' (內地化理論) and anthropologist Chi-Nan Chen's (陳其南) theory of 'indigenisation' (土著化理論) are two influential models for the redefinition of the

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<sup>112</sup> Wang, *Taiwanese Historiography*, 98.

<sup>113</sup> Shao-Hsin Chen, 'Taiwan: the laboratory of Chinese social cultural studies', in Shao-Hsin Chen, *The Transformation of the Population and Society of Taiwan* (Taipei: Linking Books, 1979), 1-7.

<sup>114</sup> Wang, *Taiwanese Historiography*, 97-98.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 99.



inner transformation of Taiwanese society. Li conducted a comprehensive study of the ruling policies of the Qing government and suggested that the Qing dynasty established Taiwan as a province of China and applied Chinese political, social and cultural institutions in transforming Taiwan's immigrant society into a modern Chinese society.<sup>116</sup> Li's research focused on the interrelations between Taiwan and China and interprets Taiwanese society as 'the extension of Chinese Han society'<sup>117</sup> and 'the expansion of the Qing Empire and Chinese culture'.<sup>118</sup>

Formulated in 1976, Chi-Nan Chen's 'theory of indigenisation' is a critique of Li's 'theory of inland assimilation', and provides an alternative interpretation in arguing for the transformation from an immigrant society into a local society. According to Chen's theory, it is suggested that before Qing ruled Taiwan, Taiwanese Han immigrants had formed a unique Taiwanese Han society and had developed its specific social and cultural characteristics through the localisation of Chinese Han culture.<sup>119</sup> Although Chen had begun to discuss the nature of a unique Taiwanese identity, his theory was still developed within the framework of Chinese research and 'sees Taiwan as the laboratory for the studies on Chinese society and culture'.<sup>120</sup> For Chi-Nan Chen, 'his study on the Taiwanese society of the Qing Dynasty was still a subordinate field of China research. However, his concept of indigenisation had been accepted by

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<sup>116</sup> Kuo-Chi Li, 'Taiwanese Modern Political History in the Qing Dynasty: Qing Government's Indigenous Policies and the Establishment of Taiwan Province, 1875-1894', in *Chinese Cultural Renaissance Monthly* 8 (12) (1975). Kuo-Chi Li, 'The Transformation of Qing Taiwanese Society', in *Chinese Journal* 5, (3) (1978). Kuo-Chi Li, 'The Local Research on Chinese Modernisation: Fujian, Zhejiang, and Taiwan, 1869-1916' (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 1982). Chang, 'The New Spirit', 81. Wang, *Taiwanese Historiography*, 100-102.

<sup>117</sup> Wang, *Taiwanese Historiography*, 99.

<sup>118</sup> Hsiao, *Reconstructing Taiwan*, 289.

<sup>119</sup> Chi-Nan Chen, *Traditional Chinese Society in Taiwan* (Taipei: Asian Culture, 1987). Chang, 'The New Spirit', 82-83. Wang, *Taiwanese Historiography*, 102-107. Hsiao, *Reconstructing Taiwan*, 289.

<sup>120</sup> Hsiao, *Reconstructing Taiwan*, 289.

Taiwanese nationalists and been used to support their Taiwanese historical views'.<sup>121</sup>

As discussed, the development of historical interpretation and research models of Taiwanese history show that before the 1980s, Taiwanese history was narrated within the narrative framework of foreign regimes, especially the Chinese Han-centred historical perspective. This phenomenon is also present in the publication of Masters dissertations on Taiwanese history. Historian Hsiao-Feng Li (李筱峰) (1981) conducted a quantitative analysis of MA dissertations on Taiwanese history from 1966 to 1983. His study shows that the main research concern of most dissertations was the historical connection between Taiwan and the Qing government, examined by narrating Taiwanese history within the theoretical frameworks of Chinese history.<sup>122</sup> In analysing Masters dissertations published in the early stages of the development of Taiwanese history, Li suggested that 'we should enhance the research on the Japanese colonial period and the post-war period; tracing back to the development of indigenous people and the issues of Han immigrants. It is not sufficient to focus merely on the history of China-ruled Taiwan'.<sup>123</sup> According to Li's study, it is suggested that he was using this information to call for a complete re-orientation in Taiwanese historiography and teaching.

This situation has changed owing to the appeal to establish *Bentuhua* history during the 1980s. Since this period, building the subjectivity of Taiwanese history became the main concern within Taiwanese historical academic circles. In 1983, historian

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<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 289.

<sup>122</sup> According to Li's statistics, there were a total of 31 MA dissertations on Taiwanese history during this period, of which 21 dissertations dealt with Taiwan during the Qing dynasty, a percentage of 67.74 %. Hsiao-Feng Li, 'The Analysis of the Achievement of the Research on Taiwan History at the Graduate Schools of History of Taiwanese Universities in the past Thirty Years', *The Taiwan Folkways*, 34 (2) (1981), 84-97.

<sup>123</sup> Li, 'Taiwan History at the Graduate Schools', 96.

Chin-Jen Cheng (鄭欽仁) published an influential article, 'The research on Taiwanese history and the review of Taiwanese consciousness' (台灣史研究與歷史意識之檢討), in which Cheng addressed the new historical view of Taiwanese history and explained its new spirit. According to Cheng, Taiwanese historians should firstly search for the uniqueness of Taiwanese history by excluding Han-centred viewpoints, and emphasise the differences between Taiwan and China. Secondly, Taiwanese historians should deconstruct traditional narratives of political history and define Taiwanese history as the history of Taiwanese people. And lastly, Taiwanese history should be narrated within the framework of world history in emphasising Taiwanese oceanic characters.<sup>124</sup> Cheng's historical view took *Bentuhua* as the means of understanding the Taiwanese past, depicting the Taiwanese present and imagining the Taiwanese future. He 'interprets Taiwanese culture and Chinese culture as two different types in order to rationalise his historical view: we need a *Bentuhua* historical narrative'.<sup>125</sup> Cheng's pioneering argument on the nature of Taiwanese history shows a strong nationalist inclination in building Taiwanese history as a new national history on the basis of what he terms 'Taiwanese subjectivity'.

Like Cheng's historical view of Taiwanese subjectivity in constructing *Bentuhua* history, Mi-Cha Wu (吳密察) also emphasised the nationalist aspect of Taiwanese history. In his article 'The establishment of Taiwan history and its topics' (台灣史的成立及其課題) (1994), Wu suggested that the accumulation of Taiwanese historical knowledge and the achievements of Taiwanese history could be ascribed to the

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<sup>124</sup> Chin-Jen Cheng, 'The research on Taiwan history and the review of Taiwanese consciousness', in *Taiwanese Literature* 84 (1983), 7-17. Also see Tsao, *Early Taiwan History*. Wang, *Taiwanese Historiography*, 123. Hsiao, *Reconstructing Taiwan*, 305-308.

<sup>125</sup> Hsiao, *Reconstructing Taiwan*, 308.

proliferation of Taiwanese nationalism in recent years.<sup>126</sup> Following Cheng's viewpoint, Wu indicated that the history of this island had been incorporated into three dominant master narratives – those of the Qing Dynasty, Japan and Kuomintang China – which did not represent the uniqueness of the Taiwanese past. The best way to understand Taiwan and Taiwanese history is to

abandon the historical views of foreign regimes and establish Taiwanese history within the geographical space of Taiwan's islands. In addition, it is also imperative to deconstruct the Han-centred historical view and establish the equal narrative of different ethnic groups in the Taiwan islands.<sup>127</sup>

This Taiwan-centred and de-constructed historical narrative positioned the writing of Taiwanese history in the context of 'Nationalism' which means that 'the most important topic for Taiwanese history is to analyse and explain Taiwanese nationalism'.<sup>128</sup> However, it must be borne in mind that in Taiwan, there exist complicated ethnic relations which means the development of Taiwanese nationalism does not progress in a singular fashion.<sup>129</sup> The complex ethnic composition of Taiwanese people makes it necessary for historians to use more diverse and egalitarian ways of understanding the different historical memories of Taiwanese people.<sup>130</sup>

On 26 February 1995, Taiwanese historians who advocate a Taiwan-centred history, established the 'Taiwan Historical Association' (台灣歷史學會) and held a conference on the topic of 'Establishing Historical View of Taiwanese Subjectivity' (建立台灣主體性的歷史觀) in which historians discussed how to interpret Taiwanese history on the

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<sup>126</sup> Wu, 'The Establishment', 78.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, 92.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, 92.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, 92.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, 92.

basis of Taiwanese subjectivity. In a conversation about the history of Taiwanese subjectivity, historian Zhuo-Quan Huang (黃卓權) (1995) suggested that no matter whether Dutch, Qing or Japan, their historical discourses are all part of the history of foreign dominance and do not represent the subjectivity of Taiwanese history. The appropriate way to write Taiwanese history is from the viewpoint of Taiwanese people.<sup>131</sup> In responding to the meaning of ‘people’s history’, historian Sheng-Yen Chang (張勝彥) (1995) criticised Ming Shih’s interpretation that Taiwanese people’s history is only four hundred years old, and argued that if Taiwan is our research centre, Taiwanese people’s history should be traced back to the pre-historical period to investigate the life and activities of Taiwanese indigenous people.<sup>132</sup> Chang and Huang’s critiques are significant for my understanding of the new Taiwanese history based on Taiwanese subjectivity since the 1990s.

Huang and Chang’s viewpoints reflect the influences of new Western social histories and postmodernism on Taiwanese historical research since the 1960s which I will discuss later in this chapter. Taking de-centralised and de-constructed opinions to challenge the traditional authorities in history-making, the rewriting of history from people’s viewpoints shows that the new independent Taiwanese history should inclusively deal with the historical memories of Taiwanese people rather than conveying the specific dominant historical narrative of the ruler.

The academic inclination to write de-centralised and deconstructed history is also illustrated by the transformation of the topics of MA dissertations. Investigating the topics of MA dissertations during the period when *Bentuhua* rapidly developed,

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<sup>131</sup> Zhuo-Quan Huang, *Newsletter of the Taiwan Historical Association* (1995), I, 29.

<sup>132</sup> Sheng-Yen Chang, *Newsletter of the Taiwan Historical Association* (1995), I, 30.

Chih-Wen Shih's (施志汶) study shows that of the 73 dissertations produced from 1983 to 1992, more than a third were concerned with Japanese colonial rule. This change in research focus from the Qing Dynasty to the Japanese period demonstrates that there were three main streams of Taiwanese history during this period. Firstly, the rediscovery of Japanese colonial experiences has left behind important historical heritage for later Taiwanese historical research. Secondly, research interests in the influence of modern Japanese constructions provide researchers with a viable historical background in studying political, social, economic and cultural change in post-war Taiwan. The research on post-war Taiwan has become another important topic since the 1990s. Lastly, by locating Taiwan within the system of world colonialism, 'the research on colonial history is not only useful for the comparative research among other post-colonial societies but also useful for Taiwanese history to generate conversations with the World history'.<sup>133</sup>

Another finding of Shih's study is that the traditional Han-centred narrative framework has been deconstructed, accompanied by the broadening of research areas. The appearance of new research topics such as local studies, social history – including gender studies, family history and class studies – economic history and Taiwanese Indigenous People, especially Taiwan Plains Aborigines (Taiwan *Pingpuzu* 台灣平埔族), not only presents the diversity of Taiwanese history, but also illustrates the growing use of source materials from ordinary people in history writing.<sup>134</sup>

From Li and Shih's analysis in the two different stages, it is suggested that since the

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<sup>133</sup> Chih-Wen Shih, 'The Reflection of Taiwan History Research: An Analysis on the MA Dissertations of Graduate Schools of History in Taiwan: 1983-1992', *Journal of the Department of History, National Taiwan Normal University* 22 (1994), 25.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

1980s, 'there has appeared a very important inclination that the interdependent relationship between Taiwan and China had been adjusted into an equal relationship. [...] Taiwan has been accepted as the centre of subjects rather than a border area of China'.<sup>135</sup> On the basis of a Taiwan-centred historical perspective, researchers of Taiwanese history have been searching for new topics and applying new approaches in establishing the independence of Taiwanese history. Compared to the narrators of China-centred master narratives, these new narrators of Taiwanese history apply de-centralised and diverse historical views in building new historical insights from Taiwanese society and Taiwanese people and critiquing the historical views of foreign regimes.<sup>136</sup> As A-Chin Hsiao indicates, 'since the early 1980s, localised history, the history of Taiwanese people and history from below have become popular ideas for researchers of Taiwan history'.<sup>137</sup>

This de-centralised and diverse Taiwanese history opens new research horizons of social history, cultural history and people's history. From the angle of people-centred history, the most significant feature of Taiwanese history is concerned with people's lives and their interactions with the land. In this sense, Taiwan, as an independent geographical area and a self-contained research field, 'is not only a living space, but also a space for history'.<sup>138</sup> With the development of democratisation and the forming

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<sup>135</sup> Chen, 'A Mainstream Research Field', 6.

<sup>136</sup> Chin-Jen Cheng, 'The research on Taiwan history and the review of Taiwanese consciousness', *Taiwanese Literature* 84 (1983), 7-17. Chen, 'A Mainstream Research Field', 3-9. Chen, 'Building Taiwan Historical View', 11-25. Lung-Chih Chang, 'The Search for the Lost Tribes of Formosa: Reflections on the Historical Study of Taiwan Plains Aborigines', in *One Hundred Years of Taiwan History Research: Reflection and Research*, ed. Fu-San Huang, Wei-Ying Ku and Tsai-Hsiu Tsai (Taipei: The Preparatory Office of the Institute of Taiwan History, Academia Sinica, [1995] 1997), 257-272. Hsiao, *Reconstructing Taiwan*, 308.

<sup>137</sup> Hsiao, *Reconstructing Taiwan*, 308.

<sup>138</sup> Yu-Ju Lin and Yu-Chong Li, *The Post-war Taiwan Historical Research, 1945-2000* (Taipei: Ministry of Science and Technology, 2004), 1.

of a liberal society, Taiwanese history has been continuing to broaden its research scope, inclusively involving issues of social transformation, gender, local areas and ethnic relationships. The establishment of Taiwanese history as an independent research field and the broadening of research topics show that the Taiwanese cultural elites' efforts in building a new Taiwan-centred history since the 1970s had reached a new stage after the 1990s. Taiwanese history, as an academic research field, draws upon the intellectual heritage of Taiwanese consciousness and Taiwanese subjectivity and focuses more on 'the diversity of Taiwanese history'.<sup>139</sup>

***The new spirits of Taiwanese history: Constructing the de-centralised and deconstructed historical narratives***

In the first two decades after 1945, with the Cold War and the emergence of the new world order, we 'saw a sharp decline in political and religious history, in the use of "ideas" as an explanation of history, and a remarkable turn to socio-economic history and to historical explanation in terms of social forces'.<sup>140</sup> There came a political and intellectual inclination to write histories on the basis of sociological empirical research and analytical methods, which 'resembled more closely the methodologies of the natural sciences than the Rankean approach which had been part of the early professionalisation of historical studies'.<sup>141</sup> The main purpose of this new challenge

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<sup>139</sup> Cheng, 'The research on Taiwan history', 7-17. I-Ko Kao, 'The Problems of Taiwan Consciousness', in *The Collection of the Debates on Taiwan Consciousness*, ed. Ming-Hui Shih (Taipei: Avanguard, [1984] 1988), 163-171. Chen, 'A Mainstream Research Field', 3-9. Chen, 'The Building of Taiwan Historical View', 11-25. Chang, 'The New Spirit of Taiwan History', 76-86. Wu, 'The Establishment', 100. Tsao, *Early Taiwan History*.

<sup>140</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, 'On the Revival of Narrative', in Eric Hobsbawm, *On History* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, [1980] 1997), 247.

<sup>141</sup> George Iggers and Edward Wang, *A Global History of Modern Historiography* (London: Pearson Education Limited, 2008), 251-252.



from social science was attempting to discover the hidden voices marginalised in national political histories, providing new interpretations for complicated social phenomena.

In Britain since the 1970s, social history, influenced by the Marxist historical model, has become an academic term explaining post-industrial social movements from the structure of classes. In this intellectual context, social history in Britain, as Eric Hobsbawm defined it, constitutes ‘works on a variety of human activities difficult to classify except in such terms as “manners, customs, and everyday life”’.<sup>142</sup> The main purpose of social history is to use people’s viewpoints and their ordinary life experiences to displace ‘the conventional political history of “great men” privileged by historicism and conventional political history’.<sup>143</sup> This ‘history from below’ broadens the historian’s theoretical framework and creates a new narrative structure in which ‘world-views, mentalities and “cultures”, standards of living and everyday life, the family, associations and other social groupings became objects of enquiry’.<sup>144</sup>

In the 1970s and 1980s, a new ‘cultural turn’, contributed to by social history, cultural anthropology and postmodernism formed an alternative perspective on how to interpret the past. The scope of this new cultural history has been enlarged to incorporate qualitative research into the lives of people from all walks of life.<sup>145</sup> In contrast to traditional professional history and master narratives, which have fuelled national historiographies, these new historical perspectives have legitimized personal

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<sup>142</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, ‘From social history to the history of society’, in Eric Hobsbawm, *On History* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, [1971] 1977), 94-96.

<sup>143</sup> Thomas Welskopp, ‘Social History’, in *Writing History: Theory and Practice*, ed. Stefan Berger, Heiko Feldner and Kevin Passmore (London: Bloomsbury Academic, [2010] 2012), 230.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, 230.

<sup>145</sup> George Iggers, *Historiography in the Twentieth Century: From Scientific Objectivity to the Postmodern Challenge* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1997), 99-135. Iggers and Wang, *Modern Historiography*, 270.

and community memory and empowered individuals to produce their own historical narratives. The new face of people's history shows 'the social structures underlying political events' and 'gives 'ordinary people back their human dignity'.<sup>146</sup>

The de-centralised and diverse academic objects of social history make this new historical outlook head toward the direction of 'micro-history', which is different from the 'macro-history' told by political regimes. In order to support this new way of thinking, historians need new research methods and research tools in discovering the hidden or marginalised voices of people. Contributed to by the popular application of social science in historical research during the 1950s, history as a means of understanding human social phenomena had established its new research paradigm.

In the United States, there was the 'New History' interdisciplinary tradition which emerged during the early 1990s and combines history, social science, psychology, geography, anthropology and archaeology. With the development and application of computer technology, historians went a step further to use statistical evidence in analysing social phenomena.<sup>147</sup> In France, historians of the *Annales* School used a new cultural historical perspective to analyse the interactions between people and their living circumstances.<sup>148</sup> For the *Annales*, 'culture is no longer understood as the privileged intellectual and aesthetic domain of an elite, but rather as the way in which a whole population experiences and lives life'.<sup>149</sup> In order to achieve their academic goal, the *Annales* historians realised that they required new historical materials,

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<sup>146</sup> Peter Burke, 'People's History or Total History', in *People's History and Socialist Theory*, ed. Raphael Samuel (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), 8.

<sup>147</sup> Iggers, *Historiography in the Twentieth Century*, 42-43.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, 51-64. Iggers and Wang, *Modern Historiography*, 256-261. Matthias Middell, 'The *Annales*' in *Writing History: Theory and Practice*, ed. Stefan Berger, Heiko Feldner, and Kevin Passmore (London, UK: Bloomsbury Academic, [2010] 2012), 108-122.

<sup>149</sup> Iggers, *Historiography in the Twentieth Century*, 52.

through the application of new research technologies. What they attempted to do was to combine other academic disciplines, such as anthropology and geography, as well as statistical data, with historical studies with the aim of abolishing the ‘boundaries between the traditional disciplines in order to integrate them into the “science of man”’.<sup>150</sup> The *Annales* historians created a new research model emphasising the ‘plurality of science’ and used this interdisciplinary research approach to reconstruct micro-historical narratives deeply rooted in people’s lives.

Influenced by the transformation of Western historiography from macro-history to micro-history, it was during the 1960s and the 1970s that a revolution of historical research emerged: ‘the movement of new history’ (新史學運動).<sup>151</sup> Influenced by Western historical methodologies, especially the social science of the United States and the French *Annales* School, Taiwanese historical research has expanded its scope from traditional Rankean historical empiricism to social and new cultural history. For Taiwanese academic circles, the gradually increasing academic concern with people and society also reflects the influence of democratisation and *Bentuhua* movements.

As discussed above, the new spirit of Taiwanese history is characterised by its de-centralised historical view, which changes the research focus from rulers’ political histories to the Taiwanese people, and their social and cultural lives. This new spirit is not only present in the search for specific historical issues, such as the 228 Incident, Taiwan’s *Pingpuzu* and multi-ethnic society, but also present in the whole structure of Taiwanese history. The permanent exhibition of the NMTH, *Our Land, Our People: The Story of Taiwan* presents a good example of a display of the general history of

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<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, 53-54.

<sup>151</sup> Cheng-Sheng Tu, *New Road for Historical Studies* (Taipei: San Min Book Co. Ltd, 2004), 3.

Taiwan. In order to formulate our understanding of the historical narrative of the NMTH, it is imperative for this chapter to analyse the new topics and the storylines of Taiwanese history.

Within the structure of Taiwanese general history, historians have been dedicating themselves to discovering further new research fields which supplement the inadequacies of the traditional master narratives. In *The Post-war Taiwan Historical Research, 1945-2000*, Yu-Ju Lin (林玉茹) and Yu-Chung Li (李毓中) reviewed important studies on Taiwanese history and showed that the application of the new research methodologies (social history and oral history) and new historical source materials (access to official archives, documents and private diaries) have permitted historians to gain diverse new historical insights into the telling of the Taiwanese past and to broaden the research scope to include all aspects of social life.<sup>152</sup> Besides traditional political histories dealing with the policies of colonial government and the Taiwanese people's resistance movements, research topics, especially after the 1980s, have been expanded to incorporate economic history, local history, cultural history, medical history, family history and gender studies.

Generally speaking, the diversification of the research topics of Taiwanese history reflects the changing academic inclination from the singular 'macro-historical narrative' to de-centralised and deconstructed 'micro-history'. These new approaches in writing Taiwanese history also reflect that in contemporary Taiwanese multiculturalism, the diverse voices from each Taiwanese ethnic group and social class should be treated equally.<sup>153</sup> In order to remove the constraint of rulers' master narratives, Taiwanese

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<sup>152</sup> Lin and Li, *The Post-war Taiwan Historical Research*.

<sup>153</sup> Chang, 'The New Spirit of Taiwan History Research', 76-86. Chang, 'The Search for the Lost Tribes

history should ‘enhance the research on socio-economic history for the nature of social life and economic activities is continuing and will not be broken by the changing of regimes’.<sup>154</sup> A long-term and holistic studies on social and economic life is the best way to establish Taiwanese history as a new academic discipline.

As for the research methodologies, ‘for the restriction of data-collection under the authoritarian rule of the Kuomintang’s government and the influence of social sciences, Taiwanese history has turned to collect unofficial data from field research and oral interviewing’.<sup>155</sup> In writing history from below, oral history plays a significant role in collecting people’s memories and reconstructing modern history with unofficial historical data. The purpose of oral history, as Paul Thompson has argued, is to discuss the relationship between history and community.<sup>156</sup> Through the practice of oral history, history becomes a new form of public engagement. Oral history empowers people to tell their own story and gives them the confidence to participate in the construction of historical consciousness. Through the combination of memory and narrative, people’s life stories become meaningful and ‘just as the historian emplots the collective past as history, individual lives again shape and meaning through the life stories we create about ourselves’.<sup>157</sup> By collecting personal memories, oral history offers not only new source materials and storylines in constructing Taiwanese collective memories, but also, as a theoretical and practical approach, locates personal memory in historical narratives, recovers hidden histories and empowers people to

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of Formosa’, 257-272. Wu, ‘The Establishment’, 78-97. Tsao, *Early Taiwan History*. Hsiao, *Reconstructing Taiwan*.

<sup>154</sup> Lin and Li, *The Post-war Taiwan Historical Research*, 382.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, 382.

<sup>156</sup> Paul Thompson, *The Voice of the Past* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

<sup>157</sup> Alistair Thomson, Michael Frisch and Paula Hamilton, ‘The memory and history debates: Some international perspectives’, *Oral History* 25 (1994), 103-104.

make their own history.<sup>158</sup>

The collecting and recording of oral data in Taiwan was launched early in the 1940s, not long after the Chinese Civil War. In 1949, the ‘Historical Research Committee of Taiwan Province’ (台灣省文獻委員會) and local archive committees had begun the work of collecting oral source materials for the purpose of revising local history. In 1959, influenced by the United States, the ‘Institute of Modern History’ (中央研究院近代史研究所) at the Academia Sinica launched a series of oral interviews with important figures of the party and army. It was after 1984, due to the emergence of *Bentuhua* movement, that the oral history project of the Institute of Modern History expanded its interviewees from political figures to ordinary people.<sup>159</sup> This transformation shows ‘the breakthrough of historical views and the transformation into the service for the construction of Taiwanese historical memories’.<sup>160</sup> Owing to the abrogation of Martial Law, research on post-war Taiwanese history stimulated research interest in the 228 Incident.<sup>161</sup> Oral histories of the 228 Incident provided historians with a great number of unofficial stories with which to write traumatic memories from different people’s viewpoints.<sup>162</sup>

### ***Writing national trauma and transitional justice: Historical memories of the 228 Incident***

As discussed above, the *Melidao* Incident in 1979 stimulated *Dangwai* to construct an alternative national discourse on the basis of Taiwanese history, and the abrogation

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<sup>158</sup> Alistair Thomson, ‘Life stories and historical analysis’, in *Research Methods for History*, ed. Simon Gunn and Lucy Faire (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 101-120.

<sup>159</sup> Wang, *Fifty Years of Taiwanese Historiography*, 154.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, 154.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, 155.

<sup>162</sup> Hsiao, *Reconstructing Taiwan*, 314. Lin and Li, *The Post-war Taiwan Historical Research*, 169-170.

of Martial Law in 1987 provided a more liberal public sphere for Taiwanese cultural elites, especially *Dangwai*'s intellectuals, to deploy Taiwan-centred national narratives in challenging Kuomintang's authoritarian regime and its Chinese nationalist ideology. During that time, *Dangwai*'s magazines such as *Taiwan Eras* (台灣年代) and *The 1980s* (八〇年代) provided fora for the discussion of Taiwanese history. Due to their anti-Kuomintang standpoint, *Dangwai*'s intellectuals were dedicated to discovering Japanese colonial history in order to emphasise the spirit of resistance they perceived to embody Taiwanese history. In this sense, *Dangwai*'s historical view promoted a unique Taiwanese consciousness that could be used 'in stimulating people to resist Kuomintang'.<sup>163</sup> Seeing Kuomintang as a foreign regime, the traumatic historical memories of the 228 Incident have played an important role in shaping the unique sense of Taiwanese identity for the constructors of Taiwanese history.<sup>164</sup>

On 28 February 1947, not long after the Kuomintang government had taken over Taiwan from Japan, a fierce conflict between this new regime and Taiwanese people occurred in many of Taiwan's cities. For a long time, Kuomintang's government has seen the 228 Incident as a political taboo and public discussion of the 228 Incident was prohibited. As Masahiro Wakabayashi observed, due to the sacrifice of social elites and brutal repression, 'the 228 Incident evidently weakens the voices of Taiwanese society'. The 228 Incident is 'the most serious social crack in modern Taiwan and causes Taiwanese unique 'conflict between *Waishengren* and *Benshengren*'.<sup>165</sup> With

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<sup>163</sup> A-Chin Hsiao, 'Searching for the Nation: Taiwanese Nationalist Cultural Politics in the 1980s', *Reflection* 22 (2012b), 104.

<sup>164</sup> Wang, *Fifty Years of Taiwanese Historiography*, 176-179. Nai-Te Wu, 'Writing National Trauma: The Historical Memory of the 228 Incident', *Thinking Monthly Magazine* 8 (2008), 39-70. Hsiao, *Reconstructing Taiwan*, 311-315. Wakabayashi, *The Progress of the Taiwanisation*, 376-382.

<sup>165</sup> Wakabayashi, *The Progress of the Taiwanisation*, 374-375.

the political liberalisation of the 1980s, the 228 Incident, a traumatic historical memory, had been discussed and used politically in constructing a Taiwanese national discourse. For *Dangwai*'s narrators, the 228 Incident was used as a storyline to construct a subjective historical interpretation of the nature of ethnic conflict between *Waishengren* and *Benshengren*. The narration of 'the suffering of us and the repression from others' constitutes the 'political use of history' in emphasising that *Benshengren*, as an ethnic group, were repressed by the foreign Kuomintang *Waishengren* regime.<sup>166</sup> *Dangwai*'s historical interpretation focuses on the political inequalities between two ethnic groups: *Waishengren* and *Benshengren*. The narratives of this unequal relationship had been used as a kind of 'political rhetoric' by the Taiwanese political counterforce in 'stating and expanding their basis of political mobilisation'.<sup>167</sup> This discourse saw the 228 Incident as an ethnic conflict rather than as an internal political issue. In this sense, the writing of the history of a national trauma provides 'important spiritual sources for Taiwanese national identity' and the repression of the Kuomintang government can be explained as 'the brutality of foreign regimes'.<sup>168</sup> As A-Chin Hsiau argued, 'the rediscovery of the historical realities of the 228 Incident inherited the narratives of the early 1980s that represented Taiwanese past as the history of the process of colonised and anti-colonised, suffering and resistance. The interpretations of Taiwanese history developed by *Dangwai*'s intellectuals had been used in explaining the dominance of Kuomintang'.<sup>169</sup>

In order to heal the trauma and discover the historical evidences, President

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<sup>166</sup> Wu, 'Writing National Trauma', 7-8.

<sup>167</sup> Chang, 'The original domicile and nationalism', 234.

<sup>168</sup> Wu, 'Writing National Trauma', 2.

<sup>169</sup> Hsiau, *Reconstructing Taiwan*, 311.



Deng-Hui Li and Executive Yuan (行政院) assembled scholars to form the ‘Research Group of the 228 Incident’ (二二八事件研究小組) in 1990, and published the *Research Report of the 228 Incident* (二二八事件研究報告)<sup>170</sup> in 1994.<sup>171</sup> However, many historians still consider that ‘the 228 Incident should be interpreted from the viewpoints of Taiwanese people, that is [the] people’s standpoint’. What they believe in is ‘history from below’, and in this context, ‘they believe the methods of oral history, especially interviewing with survivors and family members of victims, is the best way to recover historical truth’.<sup>172</sup> According to Edward Wang, ‘the research on the 228 Incident has been monopolised by official interpretation for fifty years. But the official interpretation had been broken and the historical interpretation with a Taiwanese historical view has been enhanced owing to the efforts of the public. The changing of historical consciousness and explanation of the 228 Incident not only reflect the transformation of Taiwanese society and politics but also the reconstruction of repressed people’s history’.<sup>173</sup> For the narrators of the Taiwanese national imagination, the 228 Incident has been developed as a national epic and represented as a national trauma telling a story of resistance and suffering.<sup>174</sup>

***Taiwan: A multicultural and multi-ethnic society: Ethnic diversity in Taiwanese history***

Taiwan Plains Aborigines (Taiwan *Pingpuzu* 台灣平埔族) is a term which denotes indigenous tribes who have resided in Taiwan’s plain areas. Through long-term ethnic

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<sup>170</sup> Tse-Han Lai, *Research Report of the 228 Incident* (Taipei: Executive Yuan, 1994).

<sup>171</sup> Wakabayashi, *The Progress of the Taiwanisation*, 377-378.

<sup>172</sup> Hsiau, *Reconstructing Taiwan*, 314.

<sup>173</sup> Wang, *Fifty Years of Taiwanese Historiography*, 178.

<sup>174</sup> Hsiau, *Reconstructing Taiwan*, 315.

interactions with Han people such as marriage and commercial activities, *Pingpuzu* culture was gradually assimilated into Chinese Han culture and nearly disappeared in the Japanese period.<sup>175</sup> Early in the Japanese colonial period, Japanese anthropologists of the Taipei Imperial University had launched field research investigating and recording the culture, customs and activities of Taiwan's indigenous people including the *Pingpuzu* tribes. During the period when Taiwanese research had seemed an auxiliary part of Chinese history, researchers narrated *Pingpuzu* within the 'paradigm of traditional immigrant history of Taiwanese Han people'.<sup>176</sup> Comparable to the political use of the history of the 228 Incident, during the 1970s and 1980s, *Dangwai* and Taiwanese nationalist cultural elites used *Pingpuzu* history as an important element in constructing a new national imagination. For narrators of Taiwanese nationalism, *Pingpuzu* research provided 'assumed blood ties' in emphasising biological difference and cultural uniqueness from pure Chinese Han people.<sup>177</sup> Through identifying these missing tribes, these narrators also developed the discourse of ethnic diversity to challenge Kuomintang's Chinese Han-centred national narrative and thereby deepen the degree of *Bentuhua*.<sup>178</sup>

No matter whether Japanese, Han-centred or Taiwanese nationalist narrative, the 'others' discourses' had blurred the history of *Pingpuzu* for what we read is not the real native history but discourses of otherness under the dominance of mainstream

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<sup>175</sup> Chang, 'The Search for the Lost Tribes of Formosa'. Wang, *Fifty Years of Taiwanese Historiography*. Hsiao, *Reconstructing Taiwan*, 316.

<sup>176</sup> Chang, 'The Search for the Lost Tribes of Formosa', 262.

<sup>177</sup> Su-Chuan Chan, 'Between Interpretations and De-Construction: the Interpretation of Modern Pingpu Phenomenon', *Thoughts and Words* 34 (3) (1996), 45-78. Mu-Shan Chen, *The Reflections and Integration of the Writing of Taiwan History between Two Sides of Taiwan Strait* (Taipei: Taiwan Student Book, 1997), 41. Hsiao, *Reconstructing Taiwan*.

<sup>178</sup> Hsiao, *Reconstructing Taiwan*, 317.

scholarship and dominate nations'.<sup>179</sup> In this intellectual context, the recovery and rebuilding of *Pingpuzu* culture and ethnic identity not only permits historians 'to use multi-ethnic viewpoints to emphasise the diversity of history and cultural interactions between indigenous people and immigrants',<sup>180</sup> but also an alternative historical interpretation originating from people.

Scientific and synthetic research on *Pingpuzu* was launched in the 1970s. Under the leadership of archaeologist Kwang-chih Chang (張光直), the Academia Sinica (中央研究院) launched an interdisciplinary research project combining archaeology, anthropology, history, philology, sociology and ethnology in surveying Taiwanese indigenous groups and ethnic interactions. Supported by this interdisciplinary project, a new 'Taiwan History Field Research Office' (台灣史田野研究室) had been built in 1986 and published the first complete *Research Bibliography of Taiwan Plains Aborigines* in 1988.<sup>181</sup> Owing to the application of an empirical, interdisciplinary approach, Taiwanese *Pingpuzu* research has entered a new stage in which researchers can rethink the meanings of ethnic relations theoretically and build multicultural and multi-ethnic research models for Taiwanese history.

Advanced by the recovery of indigenous people's hidden histories, 'the viewpoint of multi-ethnic society'<sup>182</sup> has been constructed, which not only provides a new analytical model for Taiwanese history but also supports the mainstream political and social recognition of multi-cultural and multi-ethnic groups since the 1980s.<sup>183</sup>

In 'The Search for the Lost Tribes of Formosa: Reflections on the Historical Study

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<sup>179</sup> Chang, 'The Search for the Lost Tribes of Formosa', 262.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*, 258.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*, 258.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*, 263.

<sup>183</sup> Hsiao, *Reconstructing Taiwan*, 319-320. Wakabayashi, *The Progress of the Taiwanisation*, 402.

of Taiwan Plains Aborigines' (1995) (追尋失落的福爾摩莎部落：台灣平埔族群史研究的反思), sociologist Lung-Chih Chang (張隆志) reflected on the future development of Taiwanese history and addressed the model of the 'multi-ethnic society' which 'attempts to see the history of the island as a complicated process of interactions among different ethnic groups in a changing ecological and socio-economic environment'.<sup>184</sup> Chang's model is founded 'on the basis of social viewpoints, and especially focuses on discovering the voices of marginalised and disadvantaged minorities'. Chang also goes a step further to 'establish a diverse interpretation framework in a specific historical context'.<sup>185</sup> Chang's theory of the multi-ethnic society sees Taiwan as an independent geographical space for historical development. From the viewpoint of a multi-ethnic society, Chang suggests that multi-ethnic research will provide different interpretations for Taiwanese history. As Chang puts it, 'the viewpoint of the multi-ethnic society sees the meaning and identity of Taiwanese people as the collective history of all groups rather than the announcement of any dominate or advantaged groups'. For this reason, we 'should search for a new diverse historical narrative structure in order that we can search for the total understanding of the history of the island and deal with the minor history of different ethnic groups, classes, and gender'.<sup>186</sup>

***The redefinition and relocation of Taiwan's history: The theory of 'Taiwan's Island History'***

The rediscovery of the hidden history of missing indigenous tribes provides new

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<sup>184</sup> Chang, 'The Search for the Lost Tribes of Formosa', 263.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*, 264.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*, 264-265.

historical insights in imagining Taiwan as a multi-ethnic and multicultural community in which the most significant element is not the changing of political regimes, but the interactions among different ethnic groups in Taiwan. Studies on Taiwanese ethnic relations see Taiwan as a changing and living island influenced by the interactions between people and their living spaces, rather than by the inflexible, periodical changing of regimes.

From the standpoint of the interactions between people and land, historian Yung-Ho Tsao (曹永和) goes a step further to discuss the interactions between Taiwan and the international environment, and to relocate Taiwan in the system of World history while addressing the theory of 'Taiwan's Island History' (台灣島史). Tsao's theory is the intellectual accumulation of his studies on early Dutch Formosa history. In his historical framework, Taiwan, exists as an international island whose status and meaning change according to different international relations. For this reason, 'we should locate Taiwan's Island into a modern international framework, and define the roles Taiwan plays via the world trends and development of the international situation.'<sup>187</sup> Through the analysis of the official documents, private diaries and letters and old maps of the Dutch Formosa period, Tsao discovered international communications between Taiwan and foreign powers and emphasise the 'oceanic character' of Taiwanese history.

Tsao's narrative of Taiwanese oceanic character offers a model for seeing Taiwan as an international island in which different international forces bring different influences to the Island. Examining Taiwan in different periods, we can find out that with the

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<sup>187</sup> Tsao, *Early Taiwan History*, 447.

changing of periods, ‘there appears different social characters for the changing of the international situation, the differences of ways of production, and the complex of people’s activities’.<sup>188</sup> In order to understand the changing and lasting social phenomena, historians should realise that there ‘exists many different ethnic groups, languages, and cultures in pre-historical period Taiwan’,<sup>189</sup> rather than focusing too much on the changing of political regimes. The attempt to build Taiwanese ‘oceanic culture’ shows that Taiwan history can be considered within a broader, international context rather than within the constraints of Chinese history.

Following the new trends of historical research, especially the French *Annales* School’s historical outlook, Tsao suggested that

the new trend of international historical research is to build totally and structurally social history. The research concerns have been transformed from specific figures and events into ordinary people [...] from national history into World history or totally sophisticated local studies. From this new historical trend, Taiwanese history can also build as a local total history and be investigated in the context of World history.<sup>190</sup>

The new historical view of Taiwanese history should get rid of the limitations of political history and go a step further to ‘consider three elements of people, time, and spaces’.<sup>191</sup> In this sense, historians should break their singular viewpoint and ‘construct a structural, total, and global historical view’.<sup>192</sup>

Tsao’s emphasis on the interactions between people and land confirms that the most

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<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*, 448.

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*, 448.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*, 456.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*, 457.

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*, 457.

important spirit of Taiwanese history is equal treatment for all diverse ethnic groups in this island. On this premise, Tsao indicated that

the subject of Taiwan's Island history is people in this island. As an island, the Taiwanese natural environment, and geographical characters such as current, climate, living creatures, and ecology make deep influences on people. Since the pre-historical period, there have been many ethnic groups moving into Taiwan in different periods and locations. They are making history in Taiwan.<sup>193</sup>

Tsao's emphasis on Taiwan's 'oceanic character', which is different from the 'mainland character' of China, and Taiwanese multi-ethnic society reflect the social atmosphere which has been pursuing ethnic equality since the 1990s and presents an influential research paradigm for later researchers.<sup>194</sup>

### ***Conclusion***

In this chapter, I have taken the approaches of narrative identity and cultural nationalism to create a picture of the reconstruction of Taiwan via the writing of a new Taiwanese historical discourse since the 1970s. Following the political, social and cultural context of democratisation and *Bentuhua* in post-colonial Taiwan, this chapter has dealt with the intellectual background of Taiwanese history: the searching and narrating of Taiwanese consciousness, the independence of Taiwanese history: its new spirits, issues and outlook and the connotations of Taiwanese history: its research methods and research topics. This discussion shows that history is a constructed discourse in which the representation of the past, the understanding of the present and

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<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*, 474.

<sup>194</sup> Cheng, 'The research on Taiwan history. Wu, 'The Establishment'. Tsao, *Early Taiwan History*. Chang, 'The Search for the Lost Tribes of Formosa'.

the imagination of the future are integrated into a total narrative system displaying the narrators' specific writing intentions. In the case of Chinese nationalist historical narratives, we can see that this national discourse signifies that

[...] the Kuomintang's government uses a guiding political ideology to rationalise the arrangement of political power in Taiwan and sees China as the subject and considers that no matter whether in a political or cultural dimension, Taiwan is an un-divided part of China.<sup>195</sup>

Kuomintang's constructed history uses a China-centred viewpoint to analyse the past (Han society since the Qing dynasty), the present (separated temporarily with China) and future plans (establishing a formal political relationship with China). Compared to the Kuomintang's China-centred historical discourse, the development of Taiwanese consciousness and Taiwanese identity make Taiwan-centred historical discourse an 'anti-discourse', opposing Kuomintang's China-centred history and which 'emphasises that the past, present, and future of Taiwan and its people should be concerned from the angle of Taiwanese subjectivity'.<sup>196</sup>

From the confrontation between a China-centred historical discourse and the Taiwan-centred historical discourse, it is suggested that under the postmodern concept of deconstruction, there has been no single centre of historical narrative<sup>197</sup> and that the writing of history had been understood as a 'cultural practice', which is constrained by historians' social context.<sup>198</sup> The revival of the narrative of history and the linguistic

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<sup>195</sup> Fu-Chang Wang, 'From Democratization to Ethnic Politics: The Development of Democratic Movements in Taiwan, 1970-1990', in *The Development of Taiwanese Democracy in the 20th Century*, ed. Academia Historica (Taipei: Academia Historica, 2004), 549.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*, 549-550.

<sup>197</sup> Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984). Keith Jenkins, *Re-thinking History* (London: Routledge, 2003).

<sup>198</sup> Alun Munslow, *Deconstructing History* (London, New York: Routledge, 1997), 15.



turn in the 1970s confirmed that the exercising of historical imagination and the positive role of historians as writers play important roles in the ‘creation’ of historical narratives.<sup>199</sup> In this sense, the traditional scientific historical values of impartiality and objectivity have been challenged by historians’ subjective intentions and their political, social and cultural context. Historians, as narrative-makers, are empowered to transmit their unique epistemological and ideological choices in writing history.

During the 1970s, when political reformation and cultural *Bentuhua* had just begun, the political and social reality provided *Dangwai* intellectuals and Taiwanese nationalists with a framework to build an ‘idol of the tribe as a collective symbol that related closely to Taiwan’s collective life experiences’.<sup>200</sup> Within this background, the concepts of the ‘Republic of China’ and the ‘Chinese’ are insufficient to represent the new connotations and real condition of Taiwan. It is this social constraint which makes the construction of Taiwanese history possible. At this stage, Taiwanese history, as the discourse of Taiwanese nationalism, although constructed on the basis of common historical experiences, could not be seen as an inclusive national history which empowered all ethnic groups in Taiwan to tell their own stories. Many critics have indicated that the historical experiences that Taiwanese nationalists emphasised are the common experiences of *Hoklo* (*Mingnanren* 閩南人). *Waishengren*, *Hakka* and Indigenous People’s historical experiences have been marginalised in Taiwanese nationalist discourses. These minor ethnic groups consider that ‘the announcement of Taiwan nationalism does not consider their ethnic culture and historical

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<sup>199</sup> R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (London: Clarendon Press, 1946). Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in the Nineteenth Century* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973). L. Stone, ‘The revival of narrative: reflections on a new old history’, *Past and Present* 85 (1979), 324.

<sup>200</sup> Chang, ‘The New Spirit’, 264.

experiences'.<sup>201</sup>

This situation has changed with the rediscovery of the history of Taiwan's *Pingpuzu* and the promotion of a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society after the 1990s, as the meaning and connotation of 'Taiwanese people' has been enlarged to include every ethnic group in this island. The construction of a national history dominated by specific advantaged ethnic groups now faces challenges from other ethnic groups' historical memories. As A-Chin Hsiau reminds us, 'different ethnic groups have started to announce that they have the right to write Taiwan history even though the interpretation of the Taiwanese past from different ethnic angles will inevitably cause the interpretative conflicts'. In a multicultural and multi-ethnic modern Taiwanese society, 'it will be more difficult to write national history from consistent, dominant, and singled representation of common pasts'.<sup>202</sup>

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<sup>201</sup> Fu-Chang Wang, 'Ethnic Consciousness, Nationalism and the support for Party: Taiwan's Ethnic Politics in 1990s', *Taiwan Sociology* 2 (1998), 15-16.

<sup>202</sup> Hsiau, *Reconstructing Taiwan*, 322.

## Chapter 2

### Towards a New National Museum

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#### *The pluralistic understanding of national identity in Taiwan*

In the previous chapter, I examined the birth of a new national discourse: Taiwanese history in the context of Taiwanese political democratisation and *Bentuhua* since the 1970s. In tracing the intellectual origins of the concepts of the ‘Taiwanese’ and ‘Taiwanese consciousness’, historians, as narrators of a national discourse, had attempted to use uniquely Taiwanese historical experiences in anchoring a new national imagination. In this sense, Taiwanese history is not only the objective representation of Taiwanese past, but also a complex and imaginative form of politics whose main aim is to reshape the national internal and external status quo through the construction of a collective historical cultural imagination.<sup>203</sup> However, with the emergence of ethnic debates and the empowerment of marginalised communities or minorities since the 1990s, the definitions and meanings of ‘Taiwanese’, ‘Taiwanese history’ and ‘Taiwanese identity’ have gradually transformed through their public discussion in Taiwanese society.

In talking about the building of the NMTH, the former director Mi-Cha Wu (吳密察) emphasised the fact that

Taiwan is a nation of immigrants with a constitutional democratic institution in which diverse ethnic groups could form a political community. This is the reason why we need a national history museum; the national museum is imperatively a

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<sup>203</sup> Wei-I Lee, ‘The imagination politics of museums and archive committees: The shaping of cultural spaces and historical time in post-war Taiwan, 1945-1978’, published in the *Conference of Humanities and Social Science for Taiwanese Researchers in France* (2007).

part of nationalism.<sup>204</sup>

Since the national museum could not escape the interference of political power, director Wu considered that the new national history museum should seize the ‘political correctness’ of Taiwan, which signifies that the museum should ‘emphasise the diversity of ethnic groups and the principles of a constitutional democratic immigrant nation. In this sense, although the museum has a direction in shaping a nation, the concept of the national should be very loose’.<sup>205</sup> The contemporary political correctness of an immigrant nation, a constitutional democratic institution and diverse ethnicity show that the rise of a pluralistic understanding of national identity in Taiwan is a challenging and empowering process in which the concept of ‘Taiwanese’ has continued to expand and diversify. Starting with the idea that national identity is not static, but changing, this chapter proposes to present a comprehensive examination of the NMTH: its birth, institutional characteristics, organisational development and core works for the making of Taiwanese history at the museum within Taiwan’s multicultural context.

In tracing the origin of Taiwan’s multiculturalism within the historical context of *Bentuhua*, it is suggested that the formation of a contemporary pluralistic national identity experienced three phases. In the first phase, under Kuomintang’s integrated cultural policies, all Taiwanese had been imagined as Chinese and ethnic differences had been marginalised in national discourses. Since the 1980s, due to the *Bentuhua* movements, the appearance of the classification of *Benshengren* and *Waishengren* in

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<sup>204</sup> Interview with Mi-Cha Wu, 17 May 2014.

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid.*

*Dangwai*'s political discourses raised the issue of the re-imagination and reunification of Taiwanese people. As a new ethnic group, *Benshengren* has been used as an opposing political rhetoric in challenging the Kuomintang's Chinese nationalism and striving for the political empowerment of *Benshengren*. It is in this second phase that 'the concept of ethnic classification emerged in Taiwanese society'.<sup>206</sup> The most significant aspect of the classification of Taiwanese ethnic groups, as Fu-Chang Wang (王甫昌) contends,

[...] lies in its combination with the viewpoints of modern general and equal civil rights. In this sense, this concept suggests that although there exist differences among each cultural and social group, these differences should be protected equally by the state from the discrimination from other social groups.<sup>207</sup>

Wang's argument illustrates how this 'ethnic classification' offered a de-centralised discourse which challenged and deconstructed the traditional unitary national imagination and cultural presentation. Since this time, the imagination of the ethnic composition of Taiwanese people has entered into the public sphere, in which different ethnic and cultural communities had begun to fight for their rights.

In the shift from the dichotomy of Taiwanese nationalism and Chinese nationalism to multicultural identity, the rediscovery of the historical truth of the 228 Incident plays a key role in advancing the 'ethnic reconciliation' between *Benshengren* and *Waishengren*, and represents an important component in the 'new identity politics'.<sup>208</sup>

Through the official investigation and recovery of the traumatic memories of the 228

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<sup>206</sup> Fu-Chang Wang, 'The role of the issue of ethnic politics in the transformation of Taiwanese democracy', *The Journal of Taiwan Democracy* 5 (2) (2008), 133.

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.*, 133.

<sup>208</sup> Masahiro Wakabayashi, *The Post-War Taiwan Political History: The Progress of the Taiwanisation of the Republic of China* (Taipei: National Taiwan University Press, 2014), 375.

Incident and the empowerment of *Benshengren*, the Kuomintang attempted to ‘overcome the past’ which reflects the fact that ‘since the political liberalisation and democratisation, on the basis of understanding of common experiences, *Benshengren* and *Waishengren* who have lived in this island for more than half a century could compromise with each other through discussion in an open public space’.<sup>209</sup>

The classification of *Benshengren* and *Waishengren* also provides a basis for the imagination of other cultural communities. In the 1990s, Taiwanese indigenous peoples started to strive for the recovery of their cultural rights and ethnicity. Through autonomous ethnic movements and the ‘Name Rectification Campaign’, Taiwanese aborigines have gradually made steps from a traditional, integrated national imagination to a multicultural, ethnic imagination. As ‘the first nation of Taiwan’, the aboriginal movements present a challenge to the established institution of ‘inner colonisation’<sup>210</sup> and stimulate the government and the public to pay more attention to the marginalised political, social and cultural status of indigenous people.<sup>211</sup> Influenced by the Aboriginal identity movements, Hakka cultural movements also emerged in the 1990s.<sup>212</sup> The establishment of the Council of Indigenous Peoples (行政院原住民族委員會) in 1996, and the Hakka Affairs Council (行政院客家事務委員會) in 2001, symbolise the fact that the classification of ‘indigenous people’ and ‘Hakka’ has been institutionalised and included in state policies.

In 1993, the DPP published the *White Paper on Policies* (政策白皮書) in which the DPP firstly constructed its ‘ethnic and cultural policies based on the ethnic diversity of

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<sup>209</sup> *Ibid.*, 385.

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.*, 394.

<sup>211</sup> *Ibid.*, 388-406.

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*, 403-404.

Taiwanese society in establishing the subjectivity of Taiwanese people'.<sup>213</sup> According to the *White Paper*, the traditional Chinese national imagination was unsuitable for the narration of Taiwan's pluralistic ethnic culture. In Taiwan, 'there at least exist Indigenous peoples, *Hoklo*, *Hakka*, and *Waishengren*. All these ethnic groups form the principal part of "Taiwanese" and have been integrating with each other continually'.<sup>214</sup> The argument of 'four ethnic groups' is defined as the

new classification and creation of Taiwanese on the basis of the blood origin, which presents that in the debate on Taiwan's ethnic politics, there had been a transformation from the dichotomy of *Benshengren* and *Waishengren* into a more complicated ethnic discussion.<sup>215</sup>

On the basis of the discourse of the 'four ethnic groups', a new concept emerged which regarded Taiwan as a 'political community' (or, in the DPP's political rhetoric, 'Destiny Community') in which 'all 21 million Taiwanese, no matter the ethnic background, should develop the identity with Taiwan - its land and its people'.<sup>216</sup> Although the DPP's discourse of 'four ethnic groups' shows that when facing a democratic and diverse modern society, Taiwan needs a new form of national imagination which includes different ethnic or cultural groups equally in national institutions, it still over-simplifies the complexity of Taiwanese ethnic culture in which the diversity of Taiwan's indigenous ethnic groups are categorised within the term 'Aborigines', and it is still necessary to discuss whether *Waishengren* can be regarded

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<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*, 406.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*, 406.

<sup>215</sup> Mao-Kuei Chang, 'Taiwanese Political Transformation and the Process of Ethnic Politics', in *Ethnic Politics and Policies*, ed. Cheng-Feng Shih (Taipei: Avanguard, 1997), 60-61.

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*, 63-64.

as an ethnic group.<sup>217</sup>

No matter the advantages or disadvantages of the new national imagination and ethnic classification, these ethnic identity movements indeed provide a sphere for public discussion on the narration of Taiwan's present and the imagination of Taiwan's future. During the past 20 years in Taiwan, a multicultural national identity has gradually become the social consensus in understanding the questions of 'what is Taiwanese?' and 'what is Taiwanese identity?'. Through the process of Constitutional amendment in 1997, the spirit of multiculturalism was firstly presented in the basic state policies of the Republic of China. In Article 10 of *The Additional Articles of the Constitution of the Republic of China* (中華民國憲法增修條文) of 1997, titled the 'Economic Development, Assistance to Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises, Guarantee of women, the handicapped and aborigines', the Constitution proclaims that the State should 'affirm cultural pluralism and shall actively preserve and foster the development of aboriginal languages and cultures'.<sup>218</sup> This statement indicates that Taiwan has gradually 'abandoned the past one-centred national integration policy and the adoption of some kind of multiculturalist national integration policy based on multicultural and multi-ethnic Taiwanese society had been a common sense of all political forces'.<sup>219</sup>

Considering the issue of national identity in a Taiwanese context, it is suggested that no matter whether traditional official Chinese national imagination or *Bentuhua* Taiwanese national imagination, both are inadequate in understanding contemporary

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<sup>217</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

<sup>218</sup> Article 10, *The Additional Articles of the Constitution of the Republic of China* (1997).

<sup>219</sup> Wakabayashi, *The Progress of the Taiwanisation*, 372.



Taiwan's pluralistic national identity. For contemporary multicultural and democratic Taiwanese society, it is essential to locate in our way of thinking, beyond the 'ideologies of independence and unification', and to construct a new national imagination in a polyethnic state.<sup>220</sup> In *Liberalism, Nationalism and National Identity* (1998), Yi-Hua Jiang (江宜樺) considered that a revised constitutional liberalist national identity could provide a pragmatic common sense of contemporary Taiwanese national identity. When facing a complex ethnic culture and diverse historical memories, 'the liberal democratic political principle has been the only lasting and critical intellectual heritage in the past forty years, which has been the main ideal system guiding the development of Taiwanese politics and society'.<sup>221</sup> In a multi-ethnic state, as Jiang suggested,

the state should concern on providing a complete and reasonable constitutional institution for the protection of individual rights, which are the keys for citizens' decision of identity. The ethnic background, gender or class, should not be the standard in deciding who are the members of a state. The spirits of this kind of constitutional institution are close to civic nationalism for the presentation of modern civic consciousness and recognition of polyethnic culture'.<sup>222</sup>

Liberal constitutional democratic national identity provides a compromise route for Taiwanese society beyond the opposing and confronting national ideologies of

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<sup>220</sup> Yi-Hua Jiang, 'The national identity in the liberal democratic institution', *Taiwan: A Radical Quarterly in Social Studies* 25 (1997), 83-121. Yi-Hua Jiang, *Liberalism, Nationalism and National Identity* (Taipei: Yang-Chi Book Co., Ltd., 1998). Kao-Yen Hsiao, 'National identity, nationalism and constitutional democracy: The development and reflection of contemporary political philosophy', *Taiwan: A Radical Quarterly in Social Studies* 26 (1997), 1-27. Yin-Wen Tsai, 'Identity and politics: A theoretical reflection', *Taiwanese Journal of Political Science* 8 (1997), 51-83.

<sup>221</sup> Jiang, 'The national identity in the liberal democratic institution', 118. Mu-Ming Chen, 'The current research and the future prospect of Taiwanese national identity', in *The Cultural Discourse of National Identity*, ed. Cheng-Feng Shih (Taipei: Taiwan International Studies Association, 2006), 23-42.

<sup>222</sup> Jiang, *Liberalism, Nationalism and National Identity*, 161-162.

‘unification-independence’. In considering the advantages and disadvantages of nationalism, communitarianism and liberalism, Jiang considered that in a polyethnic state like Taiwan, ‘the good ethnic relationship is the essential prerequisite for the construction of national identity’. The idea of multiculturalism not only provides a check for liberalist national identity, but also ‘recognises the existence of minor groups and their collective rights’.<sup>223</sup>

From Jiang’s argument of Taiwanese national identity, it is suggested that he attempts to ask and in the meantime answer the question: Is it possible not to presume the concept of nation in a democratic society?<sup>224</sup> Compared to the assimilation of disadvantaged minorities into the dominance of an advantaged ethnic group, ‘the idea of ethnic multiculturalism not only changes the political arrangement in the post-war Taiwan but also leads the social relations to the direction of diversity and co-existing’.<sup>225</sup> Within this framework, the meanings of the terms of ‘Taiwanese’ and ‘Taiwanese consciousness’ used in Taiwanese historical narratives have been transformed with the rediscovery of marginalised or hidden ethnic historical memories, and historians attempt to create history as a ‘mutual world’,<sup>226</sup> a public sphere in which different ethnic or cultural communities can be empowered to participate in public discussion and conversation.<sup>227</sup>

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<sup>223</sup> *Ibid.*, 211.

<sup>224</sup> Yi-Hua Jiang, ‘Farewell to the nation and return to democracy: The reflection on Taiwanese political values’, (Taipei: China Times, 1999).

<sup>225</sup> Wang, ‘The transformation of Taiwanese democracy’, 133.

<sup>226</sup> ‘Historical narratives do more than articulate the narrator’s subjective appropriated reality, or his representation of history, and thus aspects of his own identity. They also invite others to share a conception of reality. When this invitation is accepted, historical narratives create a mutual world; they create a basis for consensual judgements and coordinated, cooperative action’. Jürgen Straub, ‘Telling stories, making history: Toward a narrative psychology of the historical construction of meaning’ in *Narration, Identity, and Historical Consciousness*, ed. Jürgen Straub (New York: Berghahn Books, 2005), 66.

<sup>227</sup> Lung-Chih Chang, ‘The Search for the Lost Tribes of Formosa: Reflections on the Historical Study

## *Representing Taiwan in National Museums*

In defining the political correctness of the NMTH, the above discussion illustrates the complexity of the issue of national identity in Taiwan, as well as the transformation of the meaning of 'Taiwanese'. When considering national identity from a multicultural standpoint, it is evident that the cultural identity of individual communities is more important than a collective political identity.<sup>228</sup> In the context of the de-centralisation for the authoritative regime, the idea of building a new 'modern civic state' has become popular in political language since the 1990s. Through the execution of the 'Communities Development' (社區總體營造) project in 1994, national cultural policies have begun to include social movements and local historical works into the framework of this project; meanwhile, local museums and cultural centres have been established in each county (city). The main aim of the project is to 'promote the cultural standard of communities and the participation of local people in cultural development. The social oriented cultural policies filled with civic consciousness directly make influences on the development of local and community museums'.<sup>229</sup> Although the original spirit of the Communities Development project is public participation from below, the hegemony of governmental resources and information mean the government has more power in deciding its directions. As Chi-Jung Chu (朱

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of Taiwan Plains Aborigines', in *One Hundred Years of Taiwan History Research: Reflection and Research*, ed. Fu-San Huang, Wei-Ying Ku and Tsai-Hsiu Tsai (Taipei: The Preparatory Office of the Institute of Taiwan History, Academia Sinica, [1995] 1997), 257-272. Yong-Ho Tsao, *The Sequel of the Research on Early Taiwan History* (Taipei: Linking Books, 2000).

<sup>228</sup> Jiang, *Liberalism, Nationalism and National Identity*, 92.

<sup>229</sup> Ji-Jung Chu, 'The national forces in the development of national museums: The discussion on Taiwanese experiences', *Museology Quarterly*, 28 (1) (Taichung: National Museum of Natural Science, 2014), 5-29.

紀蓉) argues, in the Communities Development project, ‘the emphasis on communities and people in building museums could be said to be a part of the larger structure of the construction of Taiwan’s subjective consciousness’.<sup>230</sup>

The development of local museums and local historical workshops illustrates that when facing the challenge of modern multiculturalism, Taiwanese cultural and museum policies have gradually reconsidered the issue of how to empower diverse viewpoints in museums’ cultural representation. Besides the empowerment of local communities, the representation of a plural ethnic culture – especially Taiwanese indigenous peoples’ culture – in museums is another significant phenomenon for our understanding of the same issue. In ‘Reflections on the Exhibitions of Ethnicity: Observations from the Post-authoritarian Taiwan’ (2014), Wei-I Lee (李威宜) examines the interactions between cultural representation, politics of voice and community empowerment in the museum sphere since the collapse of authoritarian monolithic museum exhibition politics during the past 20 years. In examining the popularity of displaying ethnic culture in museums, Lee suggests that the function of cultural representation in museums has been insufficient to meet multicultural social needs and should concern itself more with ‘protecting a diverse public presentation’, in order to realise the goal of social justice.<sup>231</sup>

Taking the exhibition of ethnicity in museums as a starting point, Lee suggests that ‘through the impact of Taiwanese democratisation and the transformation of the intellectual paradigm since the 1990s, Taiwan’s museums have transformed their

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<sup>230</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>231</sup> Wei-I Lee, ‘Reflections on the Exhibitions of Ethnicity: Observations from the Post-authoritarian Taiwan’, *Journal of Archaeology and Anthropology* 80 (2014), 221-250.

characteristics in providing fields for the voices of indigenous peoples'.<sup>232</sup> The exhibition of the diversity of Taiwanese indigenous peoples in museums demonstrates that in Taiwan, a post-colonial society, it is necessary to change the language-power relationships between dominated cultural authorities and indigenous peoples, and empower indigenous peoples to write and display their own historical culture.

Within the context of the identity politics of indigenous peoples, there has been an appeal to build a national museum for indigenous peoples over the past 20 years. Why a 'national museum'? According to the *Research on the Organisation and Management of National Museums* (2011), the definition of a national museum in Taiwan is described as meeting the following criteria:

1. The national museum represents the nation; its architecture is usually the symbolic of the nation.
2. The national museum should collect the objects that can represent the nation.
3. The national museum is the product of national policies.
4. The national museum is administrated and founded by the central government; it controls more resources and takes more responsibilities than municipal and county public museums.<sup>233</sup>

From the definition above, it is suggested that the building of a national museum concerns whether the indigenous culture could present itself as a part of national culture at a high administration level and using the abundant resources of the museum space. The struggle for building a national museum for indigenous peoples in Taiwan not only represents the transformation of national cultural identity from a single nation

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<sup>232</sup> *Ibid.*, 226.

<sup>233</sup> Research, Development and Evaluation Commission, Executive Yuan, *The Research on the Organisation and Management of National Museums* (Taipei: Research, Development and Evaluation Commission, Executive Yuan, 2011), 66.

state into post-colonial multiculturalism, but also illustrates the increasing power of the interpretation of indigenous peoples in constructing national historical narratives.<sup>234</sup> In sum, the traditional monolithic authoritative narrative should be replaced by diverse public dialogue and the museum should provide a plural postmodern environment.<sup>235</sup>

The rise of ethnic issues in museums shows that in the context of multiculturalism, the recognition of a unique identity is not enough; it is necessary for museums to present the identity of ordinary citizens within disadvantaged groups. If the national museum excludes disadvantaged groups' (for example, indigenous peoples, Hakka or new immigrants) identities, this situation should be revised in order to achieve social justice.<sup>236</sup> In Taiwan, the hegemonic model of knowledge-building should be replaced by a more democratic approach, and the challenge for Taiwan's national museums is 'how to reshape and represent national cultures and national histories in ways which are sensitive to and inclusive of, today's increasingly global, postcolonial and multicultural societies'.<sup>237</sup> The debate on building a national museum for indigenous peoples provides an example for understanding that as a museum for the display of Taiwanese history, the building of the NMTH is one part of Taiwanese identity politics. Like the indigenous peoples' fight for their right to a voice, Taiwanese history, as a new national discourse presenting a new national identity, has competed with Chinese cultural representation for the shared status of national cultural narrative.

Guided by *Bentuhua* cultural policies, especially during the DPP government of

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<sup>234</sup> Mei-Fen Lu, 'From assimilation and the discourse of new nation-state on multiculturalism to review the relationships among national museums, national narrative and indigenous peoples', *Museology Quarterly* 26 (3) (Taichung: National Museum of Natural Science, 2012), 113.

<sup>235</sup> Lee, 'Reflections on the Exhibitions of Ethnicity', 226.

<sup>236</sup> Lu, 'From separated world to us', 4.

<sup>237</sup> Rhiannon Mason, *Museums, Nations, Identities: Wales and its National Museums* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2007), 102.

2000 to 2008, Taiwan's cultural representation has gradually taken possession of the right to a voice in nationally established and founded museums. Three national museums which attempt to promote Taiwan-centred culture, including the National Museum of Taiwan Literature (國立臺灣文學館) in Tainan, the National Center for Traditional Arts (國立傳統藝術中心) in Ilan and the National Museum of Taiwan History, were established. The plans to build the three national museums 'have experienced Kuomintang and DPP's regimes and cross the two different political ideologies of the two parties'.<sup>238</sup> The birth of the three national museums suggests that since the 1990s, the building of national museums had entered a new stage in which different political powers and ideologies had reached a compromise and formed a consensus that it is significant for Taiwanese society to display Taiwanese culture in national museums.

The original plan to build a new professional history museum for collecting, studying, displaying and offering education on Taiwanese history can be traced back to 1992, when former President Den-Hui Li (李登輝) visited the Taiwan Provincial Museum (臺灣省立博物館, the predecessor of the National Taiwan Museum 國立臺灣博物館), and tasked the Taiwan Provincial Government (臺灣省政府) with the construction of the 'Provincial History Museum' (省立歷史博物館). President Li indicated that it is necessary for Taiwanese society to have a new museum to 'inherit the tradition of the Taiwan Provincial Museum and broaden the scope in collecting Taiwanese antiques'.<sup>239</sup> The main aim of this new history museum was to 'preserve Taiwanese cultural heritage, construct historical memories of Taiwanese people,

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<sup>238</sup> Chu, 'The national forces in the development of national museums', 16-17.

<sup>239</sup> Council of Cultural Affairs, the Executive Yuan (2006).

establish Taiwan history research tradition, and promote the education of Taiwanese historical culture'.<sup>240</sup> In January 1993, the first preparatory meeting was held in which the name of the new museum was determined as the 'Taiwan Provincial History Museum' (臺灣省立歷史博物館). With the reorganisation of governmental institutions and the streamlining of the Taiwan Provincial Government in 1998, the preparatory works was transferred from the Taiwan Provincial Government to the Council for Cultural Affairs of the Executive Yuan (行政院文化建設委員會). In July 1999, the 'Preparatory Office of National Museum of Taiwan History' (國立臺灣歷史博物館籌備處) was established, which is the original institution to take charge of the preparatory works of the new-born museum. After March 2007, the Preparatory Office was reorganised into the 'National Museum of Taiwan History'. In the meantime, the formal personnel and organisational system had been established. Continuing former preparatory works, the museum officially set up the Research Division, Collection Division, Exhibition Division and Public Service Division in charge of the professional works which shaped the museum's knowledge system.

Before the NMTH officially opened to the public in 2011, there were no professional national museums displaying Taiwanese history. Under the control of the Kuomintang's Chinese national imagination and cultural policies, the two main national museums, the National Palace Museum (國立故宮博物院) and the National Museum of History (國立歷史博物館), mainly represented the political and scientific power operations of the Kuomintang absolutist regime in post-war Taiwan.<sup>241</sup>

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<sup>240</sup> National Museum of Taiwan History, *Glorying Taiwan: The Special Collection of Papers for the Opening of the National Museum of Taiwan History* (Tainan: National Museum of Taiwan History, 2012), 115.

<sup>241</sup> Wei-I Lee, 'The politics and science of collection: Interpreting the exercise of political power in the



Reopening to the public in 1965, the National Palace Museum was a product of the Kuomintang's authoritative regime, which had been regarded as a 'cultural showcase for foreign visitors to know Taiwan, the Free China',<sup>242</sup> while the 'History' displayed at the National Museum of History was traditional Chinese history arranged according to the time sequences of Chinese dynasties. Before the rise of Taiwanese consciousness and democratisation in Taiwan, 'museums had been regarded as a part of Kuomintang's tools of political propaganda. Through visiting and appreciating Chinese culture, museums had the function in enhancing people's patriotism'.<sup>243</sup>

This situation changed when the DPP government dedicated itself to promoting 'transitional justice' through the construction of a Taiwan-centred national discourse during 2000-2008. In 2000, historian Cheng-Sheng Tu (杜正勝) was appointed as the director of the National Palace Museum and published *The Vision of the National Palace Museum*, in which he argued that the vision of the museum was to replace nationalist culture with diverse culture.<sup>244</sup> By introducing the concept of multiculturalism, Tu attempted to amend the traditional uniform Chinese national culture and apply diverse historical viewpoints and adopt multi-ethnic perspectives on culture in this important national museum. In 2003, the opening of the exhibition of *Ilha Formosa: The Emergence of Taiwan on the World Scene in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century* (福爾摩沙：十七世紀的台灣、荷蘭與東亞) at the National Palace Museum can be regarded as the first attempt to use the new historical insights and intellectual achievements of Taiwanese historical research in telling a unique early Taiwanese history outside the

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post-war Taiwan dictatorship from the multi-writing of museology', in *The Culture and Science of Museum Collection*, ed. Song-Shan Wan (Taipei: National Taiwan Museum, 2010), 49-68.

<sup>242</sup> Chu, 'The national forces in the development of national museums', 9.

<sup>243</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>244</sup> Lu, 'From separated world to us', 4-5.

framework of Chinese history in national museums.

The main purpose of this exhibition was to trace the historical origins of modern Taiwanese political, social and cultural development through the historical outlook of ‘ethnic and economic factors’.<sup>245</sup> By linking Taiwan Island with its external international environments, the historical narrative of the exhibition reflected on the academic achievements of historical research on Taiwanese early history and the contribution of the theoretical model of ‘Taiwan’s Island History’.<sup>246</sup> By providing visitors with entirely new historical angles in exploring the history of Taiwan Island, the exhibition enabled visitors to touch ‘the vigour and global orientation of those excluded by the orthodox society of the Chinese’, and in the meantime to realise ‘the presence of the Dutch on the island was not as exploitive as the overly simplistic historical account would have it; their rule was actually moulded by a multitude of complex ethnic and economic factors’.<sup>247</sup>

Displaying Taiwan in the National Palace Museum enables the museum to become a sphere for cultural competition between China-centred historical interpretation and Taiwan-centred historical interpretation.<sup>248</sup> If we place this exhibition in the context of the construction of Taiwanese history within the framework of Taiwanese subjectivity, it is suggested that the inner logic of this exhibition, as a part of a cultural governing

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<sup>245</sup> “The introduction to Ilha Formosa: The Emergence of Taiwan on the World Scene in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century,” National Place Museum, accessed October 5 2014, <http://www.npm.gov.tw/exhibition/formosa/english/01.htm>.

<sup>246</sup> Yung-Ho Tsao, ‘Another approach of Taiwanese historical study: The concept of the history of Island of Taiwan’, *Newsletter of Taiwan History Field Research* 15 (1990), 7-9. Yung-Ho Tsao, *The Sequel of the Research on Early Taiwan History* (Taipei: Linking Books, 2000).

<sup>247</sup> “The introduction to Ilha Formosa: The Emergence of Taiwan on the World Scene in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century,” National Place Museum, accessed October 5 2014, <http://www.npm.gov.tw/exhibition/formosa/english/01.htm>.

<sup>248</sup> Chi-Hong Wang and Mong-Yin Shen, ‘Whose Formosa? The politics of display, national construction and symbolic economy’, *Soochow Journal of Sociology* 20 (Taipei: Soochow University 2006), 1-58.

mechanism, attempted to play a role in challenging and excluding specific forms of historical interpretation (Chinese orthodox historical interpretation). In this sense, this exhibition can be related to the shaping of a Taiwan-centred historical view and the work of building a new nation.<sup>249</sup> The inclusion of diverse and marginalised historical perspectives, the emphasis on ethnic interactions, and locating Taiwan within the world system together form the intellectual basis for the *Ilha Formosa*. The new museum's exhibition politics not only reflected a social atmosphere which sought to facilitate public discussion among different ethnic groups, but also presents a model for our understanding of how to display Taiwan at the NMTH.

The building of the NMTH constitutes a long, organic progress. From the establishment of the 'Preparatory Office' in 1999 to the official opening in 2011, the collection, research and exhibitions policies have undergone many subtle changes. As a history-shaping institution, unlike the traditional authoritarian national museums, the NMTH creatively offers a public sphere for the debate of new and different historical interpretations. From the discussion on the shaping of knowledge in the museum, we can see not only the combination of the new core ideas of Taiwanese history, but also how history itself exists as the operation of national political forces deals with the past, defines the present and imagines the future through the construction of collective memories at the national museum.

In contrast to the practices of displaying Chinese culture and Chinese history through objects in traditional museums, the NMTH attempts to construct a specific museum's historical interpretation by using history as an expert knowledge system, an

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<sup>249</sup> *Ibid.*

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combining archaeology, ethnology, folklore, and museology to present the complex aspects of Taiwan; meanwhile, through diverse historical narratives, it is hoped this museum can reveal the progress of the interaction between Taiwanese diverse ethnics and living environments in the long term and open wider historical visions.<sup>250</sup>

In this sense, history is not just the pure representation of the past, but becomes a ‘historical science’; as a synthetic knowledge combining archaeology, geology and ethnology it becomes a form of ‘governmentality’ in calculating and managing past knowledge through the new form of cultural governance: museums.<sup>251</sup>

### ***The Making of Taiwanese History at the National Museum of Taiwan History***

#### ***1. Designing a new framework for the museum’s Taiwanese history***

During its founding stage from 1992 to 2000, the main work of the Preparatory Office was to discuss how to display Taiwanese history in a new museum. The original design of the museum exhibition was presented in the *Plans for the Building of Taiwan Provincial History Museum* (台灣省立歷史博物館籌建計劃), conducted by the Chinese Association of Museums in 1997. This plan proposed to divide the exhibition of Taiwanese history into five major subjects: Taiwanese general history, Taiwanese rural history, Taiwanese educational history, Taiwanese architectural history and Taiwanese railway transportation history, displayed in five separate exhibition halls.<sup>252</sup> However,

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<sup>250</sup> National Museum of Taiwan History, *Glorying Taiwan*, 114.

<sup>251</sup> Bennett, *Pasts Beyond Memory: Evolution*.

<sup>252</sup> National Museum of Taiwan History, *Glorying Taiwan*, 195-196.

since the thematic exhibition makes it difficult for visitors to understand Taiwanese history from beginning to end as a coherent narrative, the Preparatory Office decided to assemble scholars from different fields such as history and anthropology, as well as museum professionals, to re-design the exhibition plan by integrating the separate subjects into a whole framework.<sup>253</sup>

In this context, a larger *Research on the Integral Framework of Exhibition Subjects of the National Museum of Taiwan History* (國立台灣歷史博物館整體展示主題架構研究) was launched from September 2000 to February 2001. As the principle investigator Sheng-Yen Chang (張勝彥) indicated, the research project aimed to ‘construct a main exhibition framework for the transformation from Taiwanese history into a museum for Taiwanese history’ in which the questions ‘What is Taiwan?’, ‘What is Taiwanese culture?’, and ‘Who are the Taiwanese people?’ could be explained.<sup>254</sup> The design of the museum’s exhibition, according to Chang, should ‘emphasise the continuity of time and the transformation of culture’.<sup>255</sup> Through the integration of the existing thematic research projects, it is hoped that the exhibition framework could ‘establish a completed and synthetic framework in emphasising the nature of Taiwanese historical culture; meanwhile becoming the basic principle for the allocation of spaces and the museum’s research works’.<sup>256</sup>

In order to decide upon the approach of the museum’s historical narrative in

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<sup>253</sup> The Preparatory Office of the National Museum of Taiwan History, *The Recording of the Meeting of the Research on the Integral Framework of Exhibition Subjects of the National Museum of Taiwan History* (Tainan: The Preparatory Office for the National Museum of Taiwan History, [2000] 2011), 123.

<sup>254</sup> National Museum of Taiwan History, *The Research Project of the Integral Framework of Exhibition Subjects of the National Museum of Taiwan History* (Tainan: National Museum of Taiwan History, 2011), 1.

<sup>255</sup> *Ibid.*, 2-3

<sup>256</sup> *Ibid.*, 2-3.

displaying Taiwanese history, the Preparatory Office held many meetings in which the viewpoints from historians and curators could be combined and the original embryos and ideas of the museum's historical narratives could be shaped. In these meetings, the most fundamental issue was how it could be possible to break free from the restrictions imposed by the interference of political ideologies in the exhibition. As historian Mi-Cha Wu (吳密察) indicated, 'since the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, I have found that in Taiwan, the opposition between different ideologies was so stretching. Everyone attempted to strive for the power of historical interpretation'. For this reason, it is necessary to be more careful in building 'the independence of the museum' which means that the museum should not be influenced or interfered with by 'the changing of the ruling party'.<sup>257</sup> In accordance with Wu, historian Chin-Tang Tsai (蔡錦堂) also suggested that the plan of a history museum should not over-emphasise 'the changing of political regimes'. On this premise,

the main subject of the exhibition should be the land and the people who are living here. From the viewpoints of folklore, the museum's history should display people's history and in the meantime the political meanings of history should be weakened.<sup>258</sup>

Echoing Wu and Tsai's arguments, Sheng-Yen Chang (張勝彥) also indicated that 'we should design the titles related to folk life rather than the historical periodisation of political regimes in order to weaken the significance of political history'.<sup>259</sup>

From the discussion above, it is argued that the essential intellectual principle of the

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<sup>257</sup> *Ibid.*, 124.

<sup>258</sup> *Ibid.*, 126-127.

<sup>259</sup> *Ibid.*, 145.

historical interpretation at the NMTH is ‘people and their related geographical spaces, time, materials, and spirits’. The exhibition should transmit the idea that ‘historical folklore culture could present the accumulation of the life experiences of ordinary people which are close to people’s lives. Through ordinary people’s lives, we could understand the Taiwanese historical context and cultural connotations’.<sup>260</sup> This principle is also in accordance with the *Regulation of the Organisation of the National Museum of Taiwan History* (國立台灣歷史博物館組織規程).<sup>261</sup> In the *Regulation*, the NMTH is ‘administrated by the Ministry of Culture and executes the collecting, arrangement, preservation, research, exhibition, and education works related to Taiwanese history and folklore culture’.<sup>262</sup>

The integrated exhibition framework provides a fundamental plan for the later permanent exhibition *Our Land Our People: The Story of Taiwan*. The interaction between the land and the people, which emphasises the combination of folklore and history, illustrates that in a multicultural Taiwanese society, the making and executing of national cultural policies have gradually got rid of the dominance of specific cultural or political ideologies. In this sense, writing history from people’s viewpoints and folklore could be regarded as a compromise, and a safe form of display politics in which the complexities of Taiwanese national identity could enter into dialogue with each other in this public sphere and compete with each other for cultural representation in the museum. In a word, the construction of a comprehensive and coherent story of Taiwan in a single museum illustrates that Taiwanese history, recognised as a new

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<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>261</sup> National Museum of Taiwan History, *The Regulation of the Organisation of the National Museum of Taiwan History* (2007, 2012).

<sup>262</sup> *Ibid.*, Article 1.

national historical narrative, has been used at a national museum in ‘imagining and defining the nation, but for citizens and wider international communities’.<sup>263</sup>

In addition to the construction of the exhibition framework for general Taiwanese history, in 2002, the director of the Preparatory Office Li-Cheng Lu (呂理政) drafted the framework of the museum’s temporary exhibitions. In his plan, the issues of temporary exhibitions should comprise three major subjects: the history of Taiwanese international relations, the history of ethnic interactions and the history of the development of Taiwan’s modernisation. Through the research and display of material on these three subjects, the NMTH proposes to present ‘the characteristics of an island environment, diverse ethnicity, immigrant society, colonial institutions, the changing of regimes, rapid modernisation, and internationalisation in Taiwanese historical culture’.<sup>264</sup>

In order to support the museum’s diverse historical interpretation, the most significant and creative development is the NMTH’s use of gender history, oral history and field research to discover new historical material sources. In doing so, the main purpose of the museum’s research is to ‘tackle with the voices that have been marginalised in the traditional master historical narratives by representing ordinary people’s viewpoints and history of life’.<sup>265</sup> Through the collecting of unofficial historical data, the museum’s historical narrative is able to ‘cross official authoritative context, include different voices, and emphasise the research insight of ordinary

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<sup>263</sup> Simon Knell, ‘The national imagination’, in *National Museums*, ed. Simon Knell, Peter Aronsson, *et al.*, (London: Routledge, 2011), 21.

<sup>264</sup> National Museum of Taiwan History, *Glorying Taiwan*, 194.

<sup>265</sup> National Museum of Taiwan History, *The Annual Report of the National Museum of Taiwan History 2012* (Tainan: National Museum of Taiwan History, 2013), 24.



people's history'.<sup>266</sup> Taking the permanent exhibition *Our Land, Our People* as an example,

The history displayed in the exhibition spaces are the stories of Taiwanese people and the land. Furthermore, the exhibition also applies marginalised historical evidences such as the viewpoints from ordinary people, ethnic groups, local communities, gender, and foreigners in reconstructing their mobility and establishing the interactions between people and land. The exhibition uses new viewpoints to stimulate visitors to re-find themselves and achieve the goal of establishing a harmonious society through the understanding and identity with Taiwan's diverse historical culture.<sup>267</sup>

In today's multicultural and democratic society, the challenges posed by a plural culture and diverse viewpoints, especially unofficial ones, have made it more and more difficult for the governing state to maintain a hegemonic national historical narrative which has been used to 'deny or suppress ethnic or regional differences within larger societies'.<sup>268</sup> When facing new challenges, national museums have been empowered with new responsibilities in rethinking

[...] a number of their founding principles. How are the relationships between places and peoples imagined and represented; what counts as national culture (s); how are national identities defined; what is the relationships between national histories and national museum collections; and what roles are national museums expected to play in the public sphere?'.<sup>269</sup>

In responding to Taiwan's *Bentuhua*, democratisation and multiculturalism, an

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<sup>266</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>267</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>268</sup> Mason, *Museums, Nations, Identities*, 61-62.

<sup>269</sup> *Ibid.*, 62-63.

inclusive historical narrative should be constructed which provides a ‘contact zone’<sup>270</sup> for the revision of the separation between ‘us’ and ‘others’ in the traditional categorical mechanisms of national museums.<sup>271</sup>

## ***2. International Interactions: Representing Taiwan in the World System***

In Taiwan, research institutions and research resources have been centralised in Northern Taiwan, especially Taipei. Established in Southern Taiwan, Tainan City, the NMTH plays an important role in building a resource centre and research base for Taiwanese History in Southern Taiwan. In order to build a unique research centre for Taiwanese history, the museum established the Centre for Diverse Resources of Taiwanese History (台灣史多元資源中心). The Centre functioned as the intellectual database supporting the museum’s research. Operating within the framework provided by the Centre, the museum had begun to collect Taiwanese historical data for three main subjects: ‘international relations, ethnic interactions, and modernisation’.<sup>272</sup> In combining collections, a library and a digital database, the operation of the Centre has enabled the museum to ‘integrate professional museum knowledge and Taiwanese history research and open new fields and outlooks via the collection of Taiwan’s research resources, the construction of an internet data base, the coordination of Taiwan’s historical data, and interdisciplinary historical research’.<sup>273</sup>

The collections policy of the NMTH, as Director Li-Cheng Lu (呂理政) indicated, can be divided into three major dimensions which serve the purposes of opening new

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<sup>270</sup> James Clifford, *Routes, Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997).

<sup>271</sup> Lu, ‘From separated world to us’, 2-3.

<sup>272</sup> National Museum of Taiwan History, *Glorying Taiwan*, 28.

<sup>273</sup> National Museum of Taiwan History, *The Annual Report of 2012*, 28.

research fields and discovering new viewpoints. The first dimension is the investigation and collection of overseas data about Taiwan, which has been assembled by foreign museums and archive centres. The purpose of this investigative project is to 'broaden new fields of research data, build the resources for the museum, and in the meantime communicate with overseas museums in order to establish the data base of materials, archives, and image data'.<sup>274</sup> Secondly, the museum has extended its collection from official archives to unofficial historical data. Through investigating objects representing Taiwanese people's lives, the museum emphasises the transformation of the historical view from political history to people's lives. Thirdly, the museum also dedicated itself to collecting modern and contemporary objects in order to preserve significant objects for the future.<sup>275</sup>

In investigating and collecting overseas historical data relating to Taiwan, old maps and Western literature (archives, documents, letters, diaries, etc.) play important roles in reinterpreting Taiwanese history from new perspectives. The idea of collecting and studying overseas Taiwanese historical data is rooted in the historical model of 'Taiwan's Island History', which opens a new route for interpreting the colonial and international characteristics of Taiwan through examining the interactions between Taiwan and its external environment. In studying early Taiwanese history, historian Yung-Ho Tsao (曹永和) uses original documents, diaries and maps of the Dutch Formosa period in order to locate Taiwan within the world system and provide the

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<sup>274</sup> Li-Cheng Lu, 'The museum and the maps: The history and the future of the maps collection of the National Museum of Taiwan History' in *The Mapping of Formosa: The Western Maps Related to Taiwan in the 16-19 century*, ed. Li-Cheng Lu and De-Wen Wei (Tainan: National Museum of Taiwan History, 2005), 2-3.

<sup>275</sup> *Ibid.*, 2-3.

viewpoints of diverse ‘others’ with which to challenge traditional political history.<sup>276</sup>

Although the collecting and studying of overseas Taiwanese historical data is a new and distinguished activity of the museum, it could certainly be regarded as the intellectual contribution of ‘Taiwan’s Island History’ and research on Taiwan’s oceanic history.<sup>277</sup> Within this intellectual context, it is suggested that Taiwanese overseas historical data not only broadens Taiwanese historical research fields but also provides a challenging historical interpretation from the perspective of ‘others’ which signifies the transfer of the right to interpret history from ‘one-us’ to ‘diverse-others’.

The maps collection of the NMTH is composed of three categories: maps from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries (ranging from the Age of Discovery to the Qing Dynasty) which present Taiwanese international relations and ethnic interactions, maps of the Japanese period which show the development of Taiwan’s modernisation and maps of the post-war period.<sup>278</sup> As important historical material sources, maps ‘systematically record spatial information (including natural and human information)’.<sup>279</sup> Through the examination of the presentation of geographical space in maps, the readers can ‘see how the cartographers understand Taiwan and what areas (information) are important for them’.<sup>280</sup> Made by foreign cartographers, the old maps collected by the museum provide

[...] important data for the understanding of Taiwan’s international relations. The

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<sup>276</sup> Tsao, ‘The concept of the history of Island of Taiwan’.

<sup>277</sup> Chia-Yin Wong, *The Issues of Continuity of Dutch Formosa Taiwan* (Taipei: Daw Hsiang Publishing Co., 2008). Wan-Yao Chou, *The Collecting Works of Oceanic and Colonial Taiwan* (Taipei: Linking, 2012).

<sup>278</sup> Lu, ‘The museum and the maps’, 5. Chin-Chi Huang, ‘The maps collection of the National Museum of Taiwan History’ in *Treasuring Taiwan: The Collection Catalogue of National Museum of Taiwan History* (Tainan, Taiwan: National Museum of Taiwan History, 2010), 64-65.

<sup>279</sup> Huang, ‘The maps collection of the National Museum of Taiwan History’, 62.

<sup>280</sup> *Ibid.*, 62.

maps illustrate that Taiwan has not been isolated from the other parts of the World. Since the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Taiwan has been recorded in Western old maps and gradually appeared in the stage of World history. These maps not only supplement the inadequacies of written data and objects but also record foreigners' progress of knowing Taiwan.<sup>281</sup>

Besides old maps, the collecting of Western literature also offers important written records for the interpretation of the cultural interchange between East and West. The significance of this literature is to reflect 'European overseas expansion and the historical progress of the Western dominance on East Asia which presents the basic European viewpoints'.<sup>282</sup> During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Taiwan, as the commercial junction between China and Japan, and due to its important geographical location, was soon occupied by the Dutch and Spanish before the immigration of the Chinese Han people. Due to the lack of Han-centred narratives, these outsiders' narratives provide valuable sources for the preservation of early Taiwanese history.

Surrounding this collection policy, since 2002, the Preparatory Office had launched an investigation of overseas museums and archive centres. For example, the *Research Project of the Collections of Taiwan Films Data of the National Archives and the Records Administration in the USA* (2002), the *Research Project of Taiwan Image Data in the Age of Discovery* (April, 2002), the *Research Project of the Investigation on Taiwan Data in UK and US Museums* (June, 2002), the *Research Project of the Exhibition of Seeing Taiwan from Old Maps* (May, 2003), the *Research Project of the*

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<sup>281</sup> Lu, 'The museum and the maps', 5.

<sup>282</sup> Wen-Chen Shih, 'The presentation of Taiwan international relations: The collection of Western books' in *Treasuring Taiwan: The Collection Catalogue of National Museum of Taiwan History*, Tainan (Taiwan: National Museum of Taiwan History, 2010), 96.

*Investigation on Taiwan Old Maps and Data: Kobe City Museum, Japan* (July, 2003), the *Research Project of the Exhibition of the Images of Formosa in other countries' eyes* (August, 2003) and the *Research Project of the Investigation on Taiwan data in Spain, Portugal, and Mexico* (March, 2004).<sup>283</sup>

On the basis of these research projects, in 2004, the Preparatory Office curated the exhibition of *Beautiful Taiwan: Formosa in Europeans' Eyes* (美麗的台灣：歐洲人眼中的福爾摩沙) in Paris. Through the display of historical objects such as maps, pictures and images, the exhibition attempts to 'represent the interactions between Taiwan and the outer world since the Age of Discovery; meanwhile presenting Europeans' imaginations of Taiwan'.<sup>284</sup> In 2009, the exhibition *Meeting with Taiwan: A Multicultural Island* (遇見台灣：一個多元文化的島嶼) opened in the Kreismuseum Oberhavel, Germany, which displayed Taiwan as it appears in European records in order to present the interactions between Europe and Taiwan. The process of 'discovering Taiwan', as the exhibition represented it, 'is not the one way process of how Europeans discovered Taiwan but a process of interexchange and inter-understanding'.<sup>285</sup>

After the official establishment of the NMTH in 2007, the Research Division continued its former investigative works and went a step further to publish important overseas data as the research sources for the museum. For example, the museum cooperated with Taiwan Historica in translating the letters and documents of the Dutch East India Company (the VOC) in 2008. Since opening to the public, the museum has

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<sup>283</sup> National Museum of Taiwan History, *Glorying Taiwan*, 116-117.

<sup>284</sup> *Ibid.*, 126. Also see "The report for the overseas works of the exhibition *Beautiful Taiwan: Formosa in Europeans' Eyes*," The Website for the Reports of Overseas Works, accessed November 4 2014, [http://report.nat.gov.tw/ReportFront/report\\_detail.aspx?sysId=C09302946#c](http://report.nat.gov.tw/ReportFront/report_detail.aspx?sysId=C09302946#c)

<sup>285</sup> National Museum of Taiwan History, *The Annual Report of 2012*, 82.

continued to broaden the scope of collecting overseas Taiwanese historical data in translating and editing literature such as letters, diaries, and official documents of the Dutch, Spanish, Japanese and post-war periods in order to ‘achieve the goal of constructing diverse historical interpretation’.<sup>286</sup>

### ***3. Public History: Representing Taiwan from people’s narratives***

Following the challenges of post-modernism and the linguistic turn, the writing of history, to some degree, could be conceived as a constructive process in which both professional historians and ordinary people create their own ‘story spaces’<sup>287</sup> through the process of meaning-making. In a manner similar to those of professional historians, every person has his or her own narrative activities they use to tell their individual, unique history. In this sense, the positive role of narrators in meaning-making processes empowers ordinary people or marginalised minority groups to tell their own story of the past and create their specific story space using unofficial materials such as memories, life experiences, family history, etc. This people-centred history has been termed public history and presents itself in various aspects such as family gatherings, historical novels, films, history museums and historic sites. As public historian Paul Martin said,

[...] public history outside the academy [...] [may] speak to a personalized,

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<sup>286</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

<sup>287</sup> According to Alun Munslow, the story space is ‘the authored model of what, how, when, why and to whom things happened in the past, which reader/consumer enters into when they read, view or “experience” the past, constituted as history’.<sup>287</sup> In creating a story space, professional historians/curators and ordinary people share the common narrative structure, which attempts to transform historical time (real time of the past) into narrative time (storied time) via emplotment of the elements of story. Alun Munslow, *Narrative and History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 53.

experiential or autodidactic knowledge that informs the individual on history's role in shaping their present. It is public history also because in its recognition it empowers the individual in their sense of its ownership and as contributors to what history is and how it is made.<sup>288</sup>

It is through public history that diverse, democratic and de-centred historical narratives could be shaped and may continue to challenge and critique academic historical narratives.

Public history is now well-established within the field of new history, and its central theory is that the interpretation of the past is not the sole privilege of professional historians but rather that 'history is owned by those whose past is described in the narrative because that story, their own version of it resides in their memories and establishes their identities'.<sup>289</sup> The emphasis on public involvement in history-making illustrates that people can make history in their daily life using similar methods to professional historians. In this sense, people will become positive and creative history-makers rather than mere consumers of history.<sup>290</sup>

In responding to the new development of public-facing history, since its preparatory period, the NMTH has devoted itself to the work of collecting people's stories and ordinary life objects in attempting to 'represent diverse viewpoints' through opening up materials for history.<sup>291</sup> Just as the using of new materials such as maps and Western literature forms one important part of including diverse viewpoints from others, the museum also dedicates itself to telling Taiwanese history by 'looking after

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<sup>288</sup> Paul Martin, 'The past in the present: Who is making history?', in *The Public History Reader*, ed. Hilda Kean and Paul Martin (New York: Routledge, 2013), 2.

<sup>289</sup> Robert Archibald, *A Place to Remember: Using History to Build Community* (New York: Altamira, 1999), 155.

<sup>290</sup> Hilda Kean, 'Introduction' in *The Public History Reader*, ed. Hilda Kean and Paul Martin (New York: Routledge, 2013), xv.

<sup>291</sup> *Ibid.*, xxii.



both sides of scholars (elites) and the people',<sup>292</sup> which signifies that the making of the museum's historical narrative should consider academic research achievements and 'accumulate un-official data for the setting of new issues'.<sup>293</sup> In this sense, the museum should consider how ordinary people (non-historians) deal with their intimate past and how these 'unofficial sources of historical knowledge'<sup>294</sup> enter into academic historical narratives, especially in museums which appear to contain 'authentic objects from the past' and as people think they can learn 'real or true history' from visiting museums and historic sites.<sup>295</sup>

In order to build a 'museum for people', the museum's collection policy focuses on 'collecting the material evidences and oral history of Taiwanese historical culture; the objects that can present the issues of Taiwan's diverse historical culture and social interactions'.<sup>296</sup> According to this principle, the museum on the one hand applies the approach of oral history in rediscovering 'marginalised and hidden people's viewpoints and the characteristics of local communities',<sup>297</sup> and on the other hand 'reinterpreting Taiwan's past from the museum's material cultural studies that is different from the traditional literature-based historical writing'.<sup>298</sup>

Taking the oral history project as the core method in collecting marginalised and hidden voices from personal memories, the NMTH has launched many thematic projects to construct modern Taiwanese people's memories through oral history and

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<sup>292</sup> Li-Cheng Lu, 'Collecting Taiwan history: The collecting policies and the collecting strategies of National Museum of Taiwan History' in *Treasuring Taiwan: The Collection Catalogue of National Museum of Taiwan History* (Tainan, Taiwan: National Museum of Taiwan History, 2010), 14-21.

<sup>293</sup> National Museum of Taiwan History, *The Annual Report of 2012*, 30.

<sup>294</sup> Raphael Samuel, *Theatres of Memory*, in *The Public History Reader*, ed. Hilda Kean and Paul Martin (New York: Routledge, [1994] 2013), 15.

<sup>295</sup> Rosenzweig and Thelen, *The Present of the Past*, 19.

<sup>296</sup> National Museum of Taiwan History, *Glorying Taiwan*, 176.

<sup>297</sup> National Museum of Taiwan History, *The Annual Report of 2012*, 30.

<sup>298</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.

video recording. Since 2007, the NMTH conducted the *Research Project and the Plan for the Website of Taiwan Women* (臺灣女人網站內容規劃與研究計劃) (2007) which provided a public forum for scholars and the public to focus on the issues of women and their life experiences. Reconstructing the past through oral history, the main purpose of this project is to record Taiwanese women's experiences of war and colonisation. These stories, it is argued, are useful for the 'accumulation and research of Taiwanese women's historical data'. Through conducting in-depth interviews, the museum 'preserves ordinary women's voices and forms new issues of women studies from the historical angles of women's life experiences in the Japanese period'.<sup>299</sup> The intellectual achievement of this research project contributed to the temporary exhibition *Taiwan Ordinary Women Life* (台灣女人，非常好) opened in 2012. Through creating a public sphere for dialogue between micro-history and macro-history, the museum attempted to bridge the distance between the museum and the public by telling Taiwanese women's life histories that closely linked to people's lives.

From October 2008 to April 2009, the NMTH executed the *Project of the Investigation and Research of Oral History and Video Recording of the Wushe Incident* (霧社事件口述歷史調查研究與影像記錄計劃) in which the museum conducted oral interviews with tribe people relating to the *Wushe* Incident. Using the insights from different communities, genders, publics, and tribe viewpoints, this project reconstructed the historical truth of the *Wushe* Incident from the viewpoints of the indigenous tribes. The oral data and video recordings offer the voices of people marginalised and hidden in Japanese narratives of the Incident.<sup>300</sup> The oral and video

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<sup>299</sup> National Museum of Taiwan History, *Glorying Taiwan*, 161.

<sup>300</sup> National Museum of Taiwan History, *The Annual Report of 2012*, 143.

data of the *Wushe* Incident contributed to the temporary exhibition *Listen for Voices: The Special Exhibition of the Eightieth Anniversary of the Wushe Incident* (聞眾之聲：霧社事件 80 週年特展) opened in 2010. At the same time, in order to collect data for the temporary exhibition *Taiwanese people in the Second World War* (二戰下的臺灣人), the museum attempted to use the collecting and recording of Taiwanese people's war memories in reconstructing images of Taiwan during WWII.<sup>301</sup>

In addition to the three research projects above, in studying the issue of ethnic interactions the museum also applied various approaches by inviting the public to participate in the history-making process. As a core research theme of the NMTH, the rediscovery of *Pingpuzu* history not only offers diverse and decentralised historical insights beyond the traditional Han-centred narratives of Taiwanese ethnic interactions, but also opens the possibility of a multicultural and multi-ethnic understanding for Taiwanese history. In collecting the material sources for studies on the ethnic interactions between *Pingpuzu* tribes and Han people, the museum deploys oral history, field research and workshops to 'discover un-written historical material sources and then to understand history in its environmental context'.<sup>302</sup>

In choosing the research issue, the museum specifically focuses on the ethnic interactions between Han society and South Taiwan *Pingpuzu* tribes due to its location in Tainan and its mission to establish a centre for Taiwanese historical research in South Taiwan. In 2009, the NMTH collaborated with the Department of History at National Cheng-Kun University to hold the 'Historical Field Research Workshop: Ethnicity, History, and Culture' (走入歷史田野工作坊-族群、歷史與文化) which

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<sup>301</sup> *Ibid.*, 143.

<sup>302</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

‘conducted oral interviews with the old men and the residents of the tribes and video recordings for the discussion on the differences between history and anthropology’.<sup>303</sup>

The use of field research and workshops plays an essential role in the connection and interchange with local communities. Through the investigation and collection of oral historical data in the local area of Tainan, the NMTH has attempted to ‘not only shape people’s local identity but also encourage the public engagement of local communities’.<sup>304</sup>

In addition to the collection and narration of the past using oral historical data and field research, the perspective of public history adopted by the museum can be examined from its collection policies. Based on the three core projects, Taiwan’s international relations, Taiwan’s ethnic interactions and Taiwan’s modernisation, the museum collects tangible and intangible cultural heritage such as literature, folklore and the objects of ordinary life, which ‘represent the value of ordinary people’s life memories and the transformation of the historical periods of Taiwan’.<sup>305</sup> The main aim of the collection of people’s objects is to

collect the life memories of Taiwanese people. Through telling history from both material and non-material evidences, the NMTH hopes that people can find their memories in the museum; meanwhile it is hoped that the museum could represent different viewpoints in this polyethnic land.<sup>306</sup>

Under this collecting aim and policies, the NMTH has been investigating overseas literature and data about Taiwan by cooperating with other museums and institutions,

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<sup>303</sup> National Museum of Taiwan History, *Glorying Taiwan*, 160.

<sup>304</sup> *Ibid.*, 132.

<sup>305</sup> National Museum of Taiwan History, *The Annual Report of 2012*, 53.

<sup>306</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

purchasing objects from collectors and, most significantly, encouraging people to donate their life objects to the museum. In 2009, the NMTH launched their system of donation based on the core value of the 'People's Museum', in which the museum constructs people's life stories different from those of academic history by studying objects and their contexts of use. In 2011, on the basis of people's donations, the NMTH curated the exhibition *Museum for People* in which the museum proposed to 'appreciate the donors' support for the museum and improve people's understanding for the museum's professional works of collection'.<sup>307</sup> As the communicative medium for the museum and the public, the display of 'real objects' in the exhibition *Life Memories of One Hundred Years* (百年生活記憶特展) (2011) also provided a space in which people could construct their own life memories from ordinary objects.<sup>308</sup>

From the perspective of public history, the empowerment of people to tell their own history signifies that the meanings of historical construction at modern democratic and multicultural museums are treated not as 'inherent or static, but rather alive and often contested-created and modified through an interactive dialogue in many dimensions of communication'.<sup>309</sup> In this sense, the traditional, ideological, historical narrative has gradually lost its attraction for the public. People's narratives deriving directly from memory and materials collected from everyday people, including emails, photographs and paper communications have been fundamental to anchoring nations in national museums.<sup>310</sup>

Such museums highlight 'the situated nature of knowledge and the political

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<sup>307</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

<sup>308</sup> *Ibid.*, 93.

<sup>309</sup> Michael Frisch, *A Shared Authority: Essays on the Craft and Meaning of Oral and Public History* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1990), xix.

<sup>310</sup> Knell, 'The national imagination', 11.

positioning of museum authority, which can be challenged by the experience, beliefs, and emotions visitors bring with them'.<sup>311</sup> It is in this sense that the NMTH attempts to build its uniqueness in developing public culture and the issues of ordinary people's history. By using diverse materials and unique issue-based exhibition design, the purpose of the museum is to build up the characteristics of modern history research in order to fit the developmental direction of the museum for the people.<sup>312</sup>

### ***Conclusion***

In this chapter, I have discussed the NMTH within the context of the rise of multiculturalism since the 1990s. In Taiwan, due to the promotion of Taiwanese consciousness and Taiwanese subjectivity, traditional Chinese nationalism had been challenged and decentralised by Taiwanese nationalism. However, the political rhetoric of Taiwanese nationalism based on *Benshengren's* historical experiences – like the Chinese national imagination – is insufficient to explain the diversity of Taiwanese ethnic culture. In a modern constitutional democratic polyethnic state, both the Chinese and the Taiwanese national imagination may be regarded as a master narrative which presents the cultural hegemony of a specific dominant group. On this premise, this chapter suggests that the definition of 'Taiwanese' and 'Taiwanese identity' should be transformed into a more plural and inclusive expression. That is to say, experiencing the recombination of ethnic classification and the re-imagination of the composition of Taiwanese people in the past 40 years, the plural understanding of

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<sup>311</sup> Viv Golding, 'Collaborative museums: Curators, communities, collections' in *Museums and Communities*, ed. Viv Golding and Wayne Modest (London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 13.

<sup>312</sup> National Museum of Taiwan History, *The Annual Report of 2012*, 36.

national identity has become the common social consensus that different political ideologies can accept.<sup>313</sup>

Building in the unique Taiwanese context of *Bentuhua*, political democratisation and multiculturalism, the NMTH, as the ‘museum for people’ has endeavoured to become a new public space for the representation of cultural equality and the plural understanding of national identity. Established as a new national history museum that combines historical research and folklore, the museum’s core collecting, research and exhibition activities all focus on ‘land and people’. Representing Taiwanese history from the historical angles of land and people, the birth of the NMTH demonstrates that in contemporary Taiwan, the geographical range of the national imagination has been gradually adjusted to Taiwan Island and in accordance with ‘the contemporary assumption that a nation naturally fits with a specific geographical locale and would wish to collect within this territory’.<sup>314</sup> Contributed to by the re-definition and re-imagination of Taiwanese people, the museum can be regarded as the first national museum which attempts to create a public sphere for displaying the new plural understanding of national identity and promoting cultural empowerment for various ethnic and social groups in Taiwan.

Attempting to be a ‘museum for people’, the NMTH has devoted itself to telling Taiwan’s story by ‘looking after both sides of scholars (elites) and the people’. By collecting objects used in people’s ordinary lives, using oral historical material sources, field research, and holding workshops with local communities, the NMTH has

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<sup>313</sup> Chang, ‘Taiwanese Political Transformation’. Cheng-Feng Shih, ‘Taiwanese ethnic politics’, in *Ethnic Politics and Policies*, ed. Cheng-Feng Shih (Taipei: Avanguard, 1997), 73-107. Chen, ‘Taiwanese national identity’.

<sup>314</sup> Mason, *Museums, Nations, Identities*, 86.

attempted to empower ordinary people to participate in the writing of Taiwanese history and to encourage the public to share authority with historians and museum curators. The shared authority between museum professionals and the people signifies that the power relationship between authors and readers has been changed. From the perspective of modern public history, personal meaning-making has been empowered in creating history as a mutual world in which academic historical research and people's narratives could enter into dialogue as equals.<sup>315</sup>

The empowerment of ordinary people to participate in the making of history and the emphasis on the significance of the personal meaning-making process in narrating the past shows that oral history can provide diverse and de-centralised viewpoints in challenging single-viewed grand narratives. However, it should be borne in mind that regarding the methods of presenting oral history accounts, as Paul Thompson argues, the original mode of oral history is 'the single life-story narrative, especially important for informants with a rich memory'.<sup>316</sup> As this single life-story has been collected around some common themes and entered into historical narratives and museum exhibitions, the oral data governed by the logic of the historian's own argument will be used as 'a quarry from which to construct an argument'.<sup>317</sup> That is to say, in transforming personal oral data into coherent historical narratives, historian-authors still dominate the final decision in choosing which story should be included or excluded.

The editing and emplotting process in presenting oral historical data in the museum's

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<sup>315</sup> Frisch, *A Shared Authority*. Straub, 'Telling stories, making history'.

<sup>316</sup> Paul Thompson, *The Voice of the Past* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, [1994] 2000), 204.

<sup>317</sup> *Ibid.*, 204-205.



narratives illustrates that although museum professionals invite the public to share authority with them, the final making of a coherent story is still dominated by curators who work in the ‘back-stage area’ which the public is denied access to. Due to the separation of the spaces of collection, research and exhibition, curators have the right to tell history to a greater degree and become

[...] the source of an absolute authority and the museum the site of a monologic discourse in which the curator’s view of the world, translated into exhibition form, is to be relayed to a public which is denied any active role in the museum except that of looking and learning, absorbing the lessons that have been laid out before it.<sup>318</sup>

Tony Bennett’s critique of the disadvantages of the ‘dead circus’ in museums reminds us that in a more diverse and socially challenging society, museum’s knowledge systems and narrative presentation will be challenged continually by diverse public viewpoints.

In the next chapter, I propose to examine the construction of Taiwanese history at the NMTH. Taking the permanent exhibition *Our Land, Our People: The Story of Taiwan* as a case study, I will discover the ways in which the NMTH tells Taiwanese history for the public. As the main historical narrative, the story of the exhibition presents itself as a new national history contributed by the new national imagination developed in the past 40 years. Through examining the narratives and display politics of the exhibition, I propose to investigate whether this Taiwanese history can represent the characteristics of a Taiwanese multicultural national identity. In addition, I also propose to uncover how the exhibition creates a mutual world in which the public can

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<sup>318</sup> Bennett, *Pasts Beyond Memory*, 14.

find their own memories and form their own meanings.

## Chapter 3

### Displaying Taiwan: The Representation of Taiwanese History at the National Museum of Taiwan History

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#### *Transforming historical research into historical exhibitions*

In the previous chapter I used the building of the NMTH within the context of the rise of multiculturalism and plural national identity in contemporary Taiwan as a lens through which to survey its meanings, politics, research publications and the application of the achievements of Taiwanese historical research in establishing a centre for Taiwanese historical knowledge. My objective was not to provide a historical description of the development of the museum, but rather to examine the shaping of a philosophical framework and historical narratives within this institution. Continuing the discussion of the institution, in this chapter I propose to analyse the core exhibition of the NMTH, which transforms Taiwanese historical research of the past 40 years into a historical exhibition. As a historical representation of general Taiwanese history at a national history museum, the permanent exhibition *Our Land, Our People: The Story of Taiwan* (斯土斯民：台灣的故事) illustrates the NMTH's attempt to tell a coherent Taiwanese historical story within a new framework of interpretation.

The major aim of this chapter is to provide an in-depth examination of the storyline of the exhibition; that is, how the NMTH transforms academic and fragmentary historical knowledge into a complete, coherent and intelligible Taiwanese story for the public. This chapter will also consider a number of important secondary issues related

to its principal aim. In the first place, this chapter proposes to answer the question: *whose* history will be presented? In the case of *Our Land, Our People*, the definitions of both ‘land’ and ‘people’ play key roles in identifying the museum’s historical narrative; moreover, surveying this fundamental philosophy of the exhibition also permits me to gain a deeper understanding of the political correctness of the museum, and its role in shaping a new multicultural and plural understanding of national identity. Secondly, this chapter proposes to examine some vital core concepts of the exhibition which relate to the discussion in the previous two chapters, such as Taiwan’s international status, ethnic interactions, industrial modernisation and political democratisation. As formative components of the Taiwanese story, these core concepts can provide a means of understanding the theoretical basis and politics of display of the museum. Last but not least, this chapter will also evaluate the exhibition from the perspective of public history to assess to what degree the exhibition is able to deal with challenging voices in Taiwanese society.

Despite the influence of postmodernism, history has been regarded as a process of meaning-making in which both professional historians and ordinary people are able to write history imbued with specific meaning. In the museum context, the concept of ‘governmentality’, and that history is an expert knowledge, retains unique importance for museum professionals in talking about the selection and decision-making processes for the subjects of the exhibition. In the case of *Our Land, Our People*, the selection of and decisions on how to display Taiwanese history in the NMTH present a ‘complex’ of professional viewpoints. As Ming-Shan Jiang (江明珊), curator of the Exhibition Division of the NMTH explained:

In presenting the chronological history of Taiwan, *Our Land, Our People* takes ordinary people's angles to tell Taiwanese history. However, limited by historical data, it is difficult to present history merely from people's voices. With the engagement of professionals and scholars from various academic disciplines in the discussion on the design of the exhibition, the final decision of the exhibition shows the negotiation of different professional research. The final presentation of the exhibition presents the result of theme-selecting from professionals and scholars rather than from the people.<sup>319</sup>

Jiang's argument shows that the original decision on the selection of display subjects in the exhibition was a negotiation and integration of different professional research areas of Taiwanese history. This statement raises another question: namely, if the historical presentation in *Our Land, Our People* is the reconstruction of different professional research areas, how can the museum's historical narrative possibly be different from historical narratives presented in historical textbooks? In answering this question, Jiang said:

The designs of the exhibition are more visualised in which we use many dioramas and models. This visual design impresses the visitors more than the object-guided exhibitions. In this part the exhibition presents different things from textbooks. Comparing to the content of textbooks which integrates different professional opinions, the exhibition presents more flexibility in which we can deal with history from the perspectives we want.<sup>320</sup>

Through visual presentation and the use of different perspectives in selecting exhibition subjects, it is suggested that the NMTH actually represents new angles in connecting Taiwan's past, present and future. For example, as Jiang explained further:

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<sup>319</sup> Interview with Ming-Shan Jiang, April 18, 2014.

<sup>320</sup> *Ibid.*

Taking the Dutch period as an example, the textbooks must emphasise the element of Chen-Kun Cheng (Koxinga). However, you will find that there are no such elements at the museum. We know that the visitors who never visited the museum all know Chen-Kun Cheng; what we expect is to break the historical framework that has been taught in schools. What we propose to talk about is the concept that Taiwan is a commercial conjunction in the 17<sup>th</sup>-century East Asian Sea in which various people came to Taiwan and interacted with each other.<sup>321</sup>



(Figure 1) The model of archaeological site: Kenting Site (墾丁遺址) shows the combination of history and archaeology, which supplement the inadequacy of written materials and create lively representations of the people and the lives of humans who migrated to Taiwan from the south-eastern coastal areas of Asia. Photo by Shih-Hui Li.

Although the concept of the ‘governmentality’ of historical knowledge permits us to evaluate the nature of the shaping of the museum’s knowledge and narratives, including the selection of the main storyline and plots/subjects of the story, the transformation from historical knowledge into historical stories of the exhibition requires us to consider the design concepts, methods of presentation, display politics, and, most importantly, the museum’s perspectives in understanding the story.

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<sup>321</sup> Interview with Ming-Shan Jiang.

From the discussion on the original *Research on the Integral Framework of Exhibition Subjects of the National Museum of Taiwan History* (國立台灣歷史博物館整體展示主題架構研究) in the previous chapter, I initially touched upon the issue of the theoretical framework and history-making of the museum's historical narratives. In deciding what history should be told and in what storyline, the decision-making process of the *Integral Framework of Exhibition Subjects* demonstrates that in a democratic, multicultural, postcolonial and challenging Taiwanese society, the new national history museum has decided to follow a more inclusive and elastic politics of display, in which specific political ideologies are weakened and voices from different groups are incorporated. In sum, the essential philosophical basis of the NMTH is attempting to find a method to 'deal with controversial topics in a balanced way'.<sup>322</sup>

In order to achieve this goal, the original design of the display of Taiwanese history reflects the decision to combine history with folklore, which presents a new direction in displaying history from ordinary people's perspectives rather than serving the government's political propaganda; a situation which has never existed before in Taiwan's national museums. As discussed in the previous chapter, the main purpose of emphasising folklore is to understand Taiwan in a non-political context in which no matter what political regime rules Taiwan, the long-term continuity of people's lives and their interactions with the land will not be broken.<sup>323</sup> The architectural design concepts of the gallery spaces for the museum's permanent exhibition *Our Land, Our*

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<sup>322</sup> Thomas F. Gieryn, 'Balancing acts: Science, *Enola Gay* and History Wars at the Smithsonian', in *The Politics of Display: Museums, Science, Culture*, ed. Sharon Macdonald (New York: Routledge, 1998), 200.

<sup>323</sup> The Preparatory Office of the National Museum of Taiwan History, *The Recording of the Meeting of the Research on the Integral Framework of Exhibition Subjects of the National Museum of Taiwan History* (Tainan: The Preparatory Office for the National Museum of Taiwan History, 2000).

*People*, illustrate that the principle of historical continuity is a vital element in designing this gallery. As the main contracted designer of the gallery Ming-Ta Chen (陳銘達) indicates, the gallery for *Our Land, Our People* was originally designed into ‘five independent spaces equal in size to represent the prehistoric age, the Dutch and Spanish period, the Qing Dynasty, the Japanese period, and the Republic of China’.<sup>324</sup> However, since the history of people and the land is continuous and cannot be separated by the changing of political regimes, the design was changed to ‘present one continuous space, making the links and underlying continuities among various historical eras clear to visitors’.<sup>325</sup>

In selecting the subjects of a story, a basic principle for museum curators is to decide what subject is the most significant and could best represent the spirit of the period. For example, in the ‘Encounter between Disparate Cultures’, the most typical feature is an emphasis on Taiwan’s international relationships and Oceanic nature; in ‘Chinese Migration to Taiwan’, the main topic is the story of the forming of Taiwanese Han society and the building of social orders; in ‘Transformations and the New Order’, the core objective is to narrate Taiwanese experiences of modernisation, the new order in a modern nation-state and the rise of Taiwanese identity. Through selecting issues that reflect the specific spirit of each period, *Our Land, Our People* presents a unique historical view in transforming important issues or research achievements into the museum’s narratives. As Wen-Chen Shih (石文誠), curator of the Research Division of the NMTH said, ‘although the exhibition takes a chronological way to display

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<sup>324</sup> Ming-Ta Chen, ‘The designing concept of the permanent exhibition’, in *Our Land, Our People: The Story of Taiwan Guide Book* (Tainan: National Museum of Taiwan History, 2012), 26.

<sup>325</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.



Taiwanese history, we use the key words that could reflect the particular spirits of the period in deciding the subjects of the exhibition rather than using periods chronologically'.<sup>326</sup>

Moreover, Shih also indicated that it is important for an exhibition of general history to consider the problems of the 'percentage of historical periods' and 'the degree of development'. For example, the Qing Dynasty governed Taiwan for nearly three hundred years. The percentage of the display occupied by the Qing Dynasty must be reasonable, and in accordance with the principle of percentage. As for the display of the Japanese period, Shih considered that since many great transformations occurred during this period, the historical view of the museum naturally emphasises the importance of the Japanese period. This is the reason why the Japanese period is only 50 years in length, but occupies nearly one third of the whole exhibition.<sup>327</sup>

On the premise of the design principle of selecting key words and the important issues of each period in telling Taiwanese history through new perspectives, the original topic-based exhibition design of *Our Land, Our People: The Story of Taiwan* was adjusted to comprise seven units on the chronological basis:

1. The Story of Taiwan
2. The Early Residents
3. Encounters between Disparate Cultures
4. Chinese Migration to Taiwan
5. Territorial Societies and Plural Cultures
6. Transformations and the New Order
7. Towards a Diverse, Democratic Society

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<sup>326</sup> Interview with Wen-Chen Shih.

<sup>327</sup> *Ibid.*



(Figure 2) The layout of the Permanent Gallery showing the half-opened gallery space of Our Land, Our People in which a coherent Taiwanese historical story rather than separated theme-guided history could be presented. <sup>328</sup>

The basic design concepts of the exhibition are divided into three levels. The first approach to telling Taiwanese history starts with ‘appealing to people’s eyes and attracting their interest, the second approach is to explore the basic contents in order to successfully convey the basic details of the story, and the next is to provide more detailed information through the display of historical materials and images’.<sup>329</sup> Through the rebuilding of artificial landscapes and historical scenes, the exhibition chooses symbolic visual foci, such as ‘Junk’ ships, Chinese single-mast sailboats, the religious procession of *Daitianxunshou* (代天巡狩), a Japanese police station and Japanese city streets and shops. The presentation of dioramas, architectural models and

<sup>328</sup> “The Introduction of Our Land, Our People: The Story of Taiwan,” The National Museum of Taiwan History, accessed November 21, 2014, [http://www.nmth.gov.tw/excontent\\_116.html](http://www.nmth.gov.tw/excontent_116.html).

<sup>329</sup> Chen, ‘The designing concept of the permanent exhibition’, 29.

human figures make the whole exhibition gallery an interactive story space in which the representation of people's life environments 'will be more meaningful for the general public than seeing isolated objects in display cases'.<sup>330</sup> The overview of the exhibition is described in the exhibition *Guide Book*, as follows:

The exhibition is moving in a chronological order and examining the arrival of different cultures in Taiwan. The main focuses are the people and land of the island, which together made up the story of Taiwan. To present the continuity of history and the narrative smoothing of Taiwan history, the exhibition area is open and without any partitions. The story of Taiwan is presented in a lively way with the aid of many different scenes, figures, and models, presented along with historical materials, images and audio-visual content.<sup>331</sup>

The gallery design shows that the NMTH is attempting to tell a coherent historical narrative to the public. In the past 40 years, Taiwanese history has gradually established its academic independence from the framework of Chinese history and formed its narrative completeness. Historical narrative, as a type of narrative, is 'formulated from the perspective of the present, [and such narratives] are unique articulations of a continuity that creates and maintains *coherence*'.<sup>332</sup> A complete historical narrative must have beginning, process and ending, which 'creates understanding by creating connections and contexts, in different ways, but as a whole, in a unique way, and articulates all this in a unified form that makes the course of events as they are articulated plausible'.<sup>333</sup> For the history narrators, the most

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<sup>330</sup> George F. Macdonald and Stephen Alsford, 'Canadian museums and the representation of culture in a multicultural nation', in *Museums and their Communities*, ed. Sheila Watson (London and New York: Routledge, [1995] 2007), 287.

<sup>331</sup> National Museum of Taiwan History, *Our Land, Our People: The Story of Taiwan Guide Book* (Tainan: National Museum of Taiwan History, 2012), 32.

<sup>332</sup> Straub, 'Telling stories, making history', 64.

<sup>333</sup> *Ibid.*, 73.

important task is to maintain the smoothing of the narratives for the readers.<sup>334</sup>

### ***The Definition of ‘Taiwan’ and ‘Taiwanese people’***

People from all parts of the world who once visited Taiwan used different languages to name this island and its inhabitants. But how do those who live there regard themselves? Taiwan is composed of different ethnic groups with disparate languages and cultures. Thus the term “Taiwanese” is a form of self-affirmation impossible to define with a particular language or ethnicity. All those who identify with and are concerned about Taiwan, who love and accept Taiwan, and who wish to live together in this island can declare with a loud voice “I am Taiwanese”.<sup>335</sup>

In the first display unit of *Our Land, Our People*, the NMTH raises the most debated and challenging issues of identity in contemporary Taiwanese society. The question of ‘Who are the Taiwanese people?’ anchors the boundaries and direction of the Taiwanese historical narratives presented at the NMTH. As discussed in the previous chapter, the focus of the debate on national identity in Taiwan has transformed from the dichotomy between Chinese identity and Taiwanese identity to multicultural identity in order to meet changing political, institutional and social needs.<sup>336</sup> Taiwan’s ethnic diversity demonstrates that research on Taiwanese history should include diverse voices, and in the meantime de-centralise the traditional China-centred master historical narrative.<sup>337</sup> In serving a public composed of various ethnic groups with specific ethnic, cultural and historical backgrounds, the national museum as an agent for social and political change should focus on how to ‘provide a forum for debate, by

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<sup>334</sup> Polkinghorne, ‘Narrative psychology and historical consciousness’ in *Narration, Identity, and Historical Consciousness*, ed. Jürgen Straub (New York: Berghahn Books, 2005), 3-22.

<sup>335</sup> ‘Who are the Taiwanese?’, text panel, *Our Land, Our People*.

<sup>336</sup> Jiang, *Liberalism, Nationalism and National Identity*. Wakabayashi, *The Progress of Taiwanisation*.

<sup>337</sup> Cheng, ‘The research on Taiwan history’. Chang, ‘The Search for the Lost Tribes of Formosa’. Tsao, ‘The concept of the history of Island of Taiwan’. Tu, *New Road for Historical Studies*.

offering a reflective space in which people can consider issues in context – against their historic background’.<sup>338</sup>

Following the concepts of ethnic diversity and the plural understanding of identity, *Our Land, Our People* narrates the story of Taiwan within an international context and emphasises Taiwan’s status as an ‘immigrant society’ and a ‘multi-ethnic society’. The first four units of the display, charting the period from the prehistoric era to the Qing dynasty, illustrate how the exhibition transforms Taiwanese historical research based on the theory of ‘Taiwan’s Island History’ into the museum’s narratives by informing visitors how different ethnic groups gradually formed a homogeneous ‘Taiwanese people’ through the process of ethnic interaction.

At the beginning of the story, the NMTH tells visitors that ‘people of different ethnic groups and from various countries have been attracted to this island. This convergence of different languages, customs and cultures thus formed a dynamic natural and man-made landscape, engendering a plural and integrated story of Taiwan’.<sup>339</sup> Based on this essential concept, the exhibition presents a basic historical argument as to how Taiwanese multi-ethnic society was shaped by showing the integration processes of different groups of people who entered into Taiwan one after another. In sum, the main storyline of *Our Land, Our People* is to ‘present many of the human stories that arose from the interaction of these groups, and which together helped to form today’s multi-ethnic society’.<sup>340</sup> In order to provide a balanced approach to including all the ethnic groups in Taiwan, the exhibition takes the safest

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<sup>338</sup> Dawn Casey, ‘Museums as agents for social and political change’, in *Museums and their Communities*, ed. Sheila Watson (London and New York: Routledge, [2001] (2007), 292-299.

<sup>339</sup> ‘Our Land, Our People: The Story of Taiwan’, text panel, *Our Land, Our People*.

<sup>340</sup> Chen, ‘The designing concept of the permanent exhibition’, 25.

and most inclusive path of ‘self-affirmation’, by informing visitors that Taiwanese identity is an openly-discussed issue and a kind of identification with the land.

Echoing the beginning of *Our Land, Our People*, in the final part of the exhibition, the NMTH designed a display unit entitled ‘Towards a Diverse Democratic Society’, in which the museum-narrator briefly tells the visitors about the development of Taiwan’s democratisation and the shaping of multicultural identity in the post-war period. As the opening narrative of the story frames the concepts of ‘ethnic diversity’ and ‘plural culture’, the end of the story re-emphasises these same concepts in the context of a democratic Taiwanese society in order to transmit the idea of tolerance as well as forming a public forum for various ethnic groups in Taiwan. As the text panel relates:

Taiwan has been home to many ethnic groups. Since the lifting of martial law, the growing movements of self-identity throughout different ethnic groups have constructed our society as a democratic and liberal community. First, the Hakka group called for the protection of its ethnic culture. Indigenous groups then launched a renaming and reclassification movement. The original nine major indigene tribes of Taiwan were expanded to 14. A great number of people and families that migrated from Mainland China to Taiwan during 1949 and the post-war period called for the conservation of the unique culture of veteran communities. In response to the demands of various ethnic groups, the government set up the Council of Indigenous Peoples and the Council for Hakka Affairs, and implemented policies and programs to promote the use, teaching and certification of Indigene, Hakka and Hoklo languages. Ethnic group museums or cultural centres have also been built across Taiwan.<sup>341</sup>

From this narrative, it is suggested that the museum applies the concept of ‘Four

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<sup>341</sup> ‘Diverse Ethnic Groups in Taiwan’, text panel, *Our Land, Our People*.

Ethnic Groups' (四大族群): that Taiwanese people are composed of *Hoklo*, *Hakka*, *Waishengren* and Indigenous peoples in narrating the present ethnic diversity of Taiwanese society. Although the NMTH uses the simplest method of understanding the composition of the Taiwanese people for the public, this re-classification of Taiwan's ethnic groups can be validated and accepted by Taiwanese society only on the basis of the difference among each ethnic group's culture or customs, and should be exempted from political use by specific nationalist ideologies.<sup>342</sup> As the most essential component of Taiwan's story, the concept of 'ethnic diversity' presents the idea that the definition of 'Taiwanese people' is best described as the people who are living and identifying with this land. In this land, no matter what ethnic groups an individual belongs to, all Taiwanese share a common historical memory, which is the main message *Our Land, Our People: The Story of Taiwan* attempts to convey.

The above discussion demonstrates that the connotations of the 'Taiwanese people' are in accordance with the debates on Taiwanese national identity of the past 20 years. The plural understanding of national identity forms the axis of the NMTH's historical narratives. However, as a national museum which displays history, it is important for this chapter to further explore whether the Taiwanese history presented in *Our Land, Our People* can be regarded as a truly national history. If the museum's Taiwanese history is understood as national history, how does it reflect the needs of Taiwanese society in shaping common past experiences via historical representation? In investigating the nature of the museum's Taiwanese historical narratives, I asked the former museum director and curators the following question: 'Concerning the

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<sup>342</sup> Chang, 'The Search for the Lost Tribes of Formosa'.

historical narrative of the permanent exhibition *Our Land, Our People*, do you think the historical narrative presented in the exhibition can be seen as the application of the new historical viewpoint of Taiwanese subjectivity which is used to replace the old China-centred history?’

In responding to this question, former director Mi-Cha Wu’s standpoint inclines towards the view that the representation of Taiwanese history in the NMTH is an attempt to tell a new national history:

The national museum is a part of nationalism [...] there is a Taiwan’s narrative in the museum. I am not saying it is absolutely a national narrative but I hope it is an elastic Taiwan’s narrative with the intention of nationalism. I attempt to make a national history, which is not a strong national history but a national history based on constitutional democracy. [...] on the basis of identifying with the Constitution, I consider that the current purpose of Taiwanese nationalism is to build a state within the geographical area of Taiwan and the future of this state will be decided by Taiwanese people.<sup>343</sup>

When Wu assumed the position of the director of the Preparation Office of the NMTH in 2006, he soon decided upon the whole framework and executed the project *Our Land, Our People: The Story of Taiwan*. Wu’s main aim on taking over the office, as he said, was to ‘revise all the content of earlier projects and construct a Taiwanese narrative’.<sup>344</sup> This ‘Taiwanese narrative’, as Wu explained, is a soft discourse in which various historical memories and voices from different groups can be presented, rather than constituting a traditional nationalist historical discourse.<sup>345</sup> Wu’s words reflect the expectations of the academic circles of Taiwanese history and the DPP

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<sup>343</sup> Interview with Mi-Cha Wu.

<sup>344</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>345</sup> *Ibid.*



government's *Bentuhua* policies to use the new national history museum to display a new national history – Taiwanese history, which is a soft, elastic, changing and challenging national history.

It is clear that the original development of research on Taiwanese history was actually guided by a given nationalist ideology. However, with the transformation of the Taiwanese political atmosphere since the 2000s, the nationalist direction has been gradually adjusted to incorporate new, more inclusive ways of interpreting Taiwan and its historical culture. It is through this social phenomenon that director Wu's idea of nationalism and his attention to constructing a nationalist Taiwanese narrative were weakened with the broadening of new historical insights at the NMTH.

In answering the question: 'Taking the NMTH as an example, do you think the historical narratives of the Taiwanese present could guide the national imagination or the construction of a new community in the future?', Ming-Shan Jiang indicated that 'although the viewpoint of the exhibition actually is Taiwan-centred, I do not think we are creating a new nation. [...] In the process of discussing the importance of subjects, the historical narrative will be discussed in a lower level focusing on the land rather than on a national level'.<sup>346</sup> With the selection of subjects and the compromise of voices from various social or ethnic groups, the original nationalist inclination has gradually been weakened. Emphasising the slogans of 'people's history' and 'ordinary people's perspectives', the NMTH attempts to tell the public that the Taiwanese history presented at the museum is for the collection and preservation of Taiwanese people's memories. Harnessing the principles of ethnic diversity and a multicultural

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<sup>346</sup> Interview with Ming-Shan Jiang.

society, *Our Land, Our People* has been positioned as an open public forum, and has referred visitors far less to the higher level of nationalism and national history.

Another museum curator, Wen-Chen Shih, adopts a similar attitude, although he does not deny the nationalist inclinations of Taiwanese history. On the premise of the discrepancy of national identity in contemporary Taiwanese society, Shih argued that 'I think the NMTH should reflect the issue of identity discrepancy. The permanent exhibition of the museum is attempting to use the angle of telling the story of the people and the land of Taiwan Island. Using people's history to transcend national narratives and to talk about people's history of this land'. In describing the presentation of Taiwanese history in the NMTH, Shih indicated that:

Speaking from the perspective of Taiwanese historical research, there actually exist some political intentions to discriminate against Chinese history and emphasise Taiwanese subjectivity and uniqueness. For example, the research on *Pingpuzu* is to stress Taiwanese people's unique blood relationships in arguing that Taiwan has its own uniqueness in blood relationships and historical culture. However, now we hope to see Taiwan in a larger context such as from the angles of World history or East Asian commercial history. The political nature of Taiwan history had been introspected by Taiwanese historical circles and has gradually got rid of the narratives of Taiwanese subjectivity. Taiwan history has expanded its vision to the East Asian sea area and China. In a word, Taiwan history is to understand the relationships between Taiwan and other countries and what roles Taiwan plays in this historical process.<sup>347</sup>

My interviews with museum curators Ming-Shan Jiang and Wen-Chen Shih show that although Taiwan-centred historical interpretation and the emphasis on Taiwanese subjectivity are still anchoring the methods of explaining Taiwan, Taiwanese history

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<sup>347</sup> Interview with Wen-Chen Shih.

has gradually revised its nationalist approach and has been understood in a larger context during the past 20 years. As a national museum serving all Taiwanese people, the NMTH attempts to use a broader scope and a more de-centralised narrative approach (e.g. people's history) to re-interpret the connotations of Taiwanese subjectivity in Taiwanese history.

### ***Presenting Taiwan in the framework of World history***

In his influential article 'Another approach of Taiwanese historical study: The concept of Taiwan Island History', historian Yung-Ho Tsao mentioned why he applied the new perspective of Taiwan's Island History to study Taiwanese history:

I think it is more important to concern on all ethnic groups in this land than concern on specific ethnic groups. For this reason the subject of my research will be adjusted from specific ethnic groups to the land. All the ethnic groups living in this land are the ultimate concern of my research. On the basis of this idea, I think that history should be combined with the land, so I address the concept of 'Taiwan's Island History' in constructing the subjectivity of Taiwan historical research.<sup>348</sup>

Tsao's argument indicates that the core concern of 'Taiwan's Island History' is to study Taiwan from the perspectives of people, land and the interactions between both. According to the design concept of *Our Land, Our People*, the exhibition 'takes the timeline of general history in telling the history of the land and the people in Taiwan. Using the land as a stage and the Taiwanese people who sequentially come to the land as protagonists to construct multi-ethnic Taiwanese history that emphasises the

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<sup>348</sup> Tsao, 'The concept of the history of Island of Taiwan', in *The Sequel of the Research on Early Taiwan History* (Taipei: Linking Books, [1990] 2000), 479-480.

long-term interacting with natural environment'.<sup>349</sup> The design concept illustrates that the essential historical methods of *Our Land, Our People* are twofold. In the first place, the emphasis on the long-term interactions between people and the natural environment reflects the French *Annales* School's historical outlook. Secondly, and related to the influence of the *Annales*, *Our Land, Our People* also represents the endorsement of the theory of 'Taiwan's Island History' and Oceanic history in Taiwanese historical circles.

According to Tsao, the main aim of building 'Taiwan's Island History' is to discover

[...] how Taiwan's island connects with the outside world by sea in each period and how the connections influence Taiwan? That is to say, in different periods, the international situations might change the value of, location and meaning of island [...] we should locate Taiwan's island into the modern international frameworks and understand the roles Taiwan plays according to the changing of international situations.<sup>350</sup>

In addition, as the text of the exhibition panel *Asians and Europeans in Taiwan* states:

After Europeans opened up the trade route to Asia at the beginning of the 16th century, Portuguese, Spaniards and Dutch arrived successively in East Asia. Situated at a position in the middle of the north-south navigational route in the Western Pacific Ocean, Taiwan certainly was a point of attention for these Europeans. Because Han Chinese and Japanese were already active in this East Asian maritime region, Taiwan consequently became a stage for the cultural interactions between East and West at this moment in history. All the various names for Taiwan, such as "Dongfan", "Jilongshan", "Beigang", "Formosa",

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<sup>349</sup> National Museum of Taiwan History, *Glorifying Taiwan*, 195.

<sup>350</sup> Tsao, *The Sequel of the Research on Early Taiwan History*, 447.

“Hermosa”, “Taijouan”, and “Takasago”, reflect the state of knowledge of the island of Taiwan possessed by people from these countries.<sup>351</sup>

The entire representation of early Taiwanese history in the exhibition fundamentally follows the principles of ‘Taiwan’s Island History’ in showing Taiwan’s interactions with the outer world and the birth of Taiwan’s abundant ‘oceanic culture’. For example, in introducing ‘The Earliest Residents in Taiwan’, the display of the model of *Qiwulan* Site (Figure 3) shows archaeological findings which emphasise how

[...] large numbers of items from overseas have been found at the *Qiwulan* Site – such as earthenware, porcelain, copper coins, glass items and metal implements from regions of the present Mainland China, Japan, Korea, Okinawa, and Southeast Asia, proving that Taiwan was not an isolated island, and that trade with nearby regions was already quite common.<sup>352</sup>

In telling the story of ‘Encounters between Disparate Cultures’, in order to present Taiwan’s interaction with the outer world, the museum chooses the main storyline of commercial activities in narrating how the Dutch and the Spaniards colonised Taiwan for the commercial benefit of their Empires. In order to create a lively and interactive representation of commercial activities in seventeenth-century Taiwan and East Asia, the exhibition rebuilds a model of the seventeenth-century Chinese sailboat, known as a ‘Junk’, which were not only used by the Chinese, and people from Southeast Asia and Japan, but were also hired by Europeans for travel and commerce (Figure 4).<sup>353</sup>

As a selective visual focus of the exhibition, the ‘Junk’ presents itself as a symbol of seventeenth-century East Asian commercial activities and Taiwan’s interaction with

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<sup>351</sup> ‘Asians and Europeans in Taiwan’, text panel, *Our Land, Our People*.

<sup>352</sup> National Museum of Taiwan History, *Guide Book of Our Land, Our People*, 40.

<sup>353</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

Western colonial Empires.

On the basis of the chronological timeline of general Taiwanese history, in the first part of *Our Land, Our People*, the NMTH chooses to display the subject of the ‘prehistoric era and the Dutch and Spanish period 1632’, in which the design concept uses the ‘*Taijiang* Inland Sea’ (台江內海), the present location of the National Museum of Taiwan History and the site of the first Dutch colony in Taiwan, as a stage. On this stage, the exhibition deploys models of archaeological sites, Dutch castles, commercial boats and ancient maps to present the activities of different ethnic groups in Taiwan.<sup>354</sup>



(Figure 3) The model of *Qiwulan* Site showing that early in the Iron Age that residents of Taiwan had traded and established international contact with other areas in Asia. Photo by Shih-Hui Li.

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<sup>354</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.



(Figure 4) The cross-section of a Junk showing a Chinese and a Southeast Asian sailor moving goods.

Photo by Shih-Hui Li.

Within the framework of early Taiwanese history, in this first display unit, the NMTH uses its abundant collections of ancient maps and documents to reconstruct an early image of Taiwan. On this basis, the exhibition arranges plots such as ‘The Earliest Residents in Taiwan’, which tells the story of prehistoric Taiwan via archaeological data; ‘The Dutch in Taiwan’ and ‘The Spaniards in Taiwan’ show Taiwan’s important geographical location in seventeenth-century commercial sea routes; the ‘Han Chinese in Taiwan’ and ‘Indigenous Peoples and Foreigners’ tell the story of earlier ethnic interactions and the conflicts between new and old powers in Taiwan. The exhibition uses ancient maps to illustrate the geographical relationship between Taiwan and the outer world; the historical timeline situates Taiwanese history within the framework of World history (Figures 5 and 6).

In observing the design concepts and exhibition elements in the first display unit, it

is suggested that the museum sees Taiwan's Island as the narrative centre and attempts to tell Taiwan's story with Taiwanese subjectivity. At the beginning of the display unit, the NMTH tells the visitors that

[...] before the Han Chinese crossed the sea and immigrated to Taiwan, indigenes of the greater Austronesian linguistic group were already living here. Located at a major node in the maritime networks of East Asia, this treasure island attracted Chinese, Japanese, Dutch, and Spanish visitors to its shores, leading to various degrees of agitated encounters with indigenous cultures on the island, and leaving their traces there.<sup>355</sup>

By displaying Taiwan as an island in which people from various ethnic groups arrived, stayed or left, visitors are provided with a historical interpretation of the original shaping processes of contemporary Taiwanese ethnic diversity.

Besides presenting Taiwan through the broader historical lens of World history, in talking about the display of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Taiwanese history, Wen-Chen Shih suggests that using the historical insights of Taiwan Island History,

[...] we can see how Taiwan played a unique role in the Chinese South-East sea area or North-East Asia. In addition to emphasising Taiwanese subjectivity, this approach also enables Taiwanese historical research or exhibitions to dialogue with the other countries' communities and museums.<sup>356</sup>

For example, when talking about Taiwanese social development in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the NMTH could enter into dialogue with museums in Nagasaki or Okinawa. That is to say, through presenting Taiwan in a World context, an

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<sup>355</sup> 'Ethnic Diversity', text panel, *Our Land, Our People*.

<sup>356</sup> Interview with Wen-Chen Shih.



international academic forum could be created in which Taiwan's diverse images - especially foreigners' (outsiders') viewpoints – could be presented as new historical data in constructing Taiwan's early history.<sup>357</sup>



(Figure 5) These models of human figures represent the encounter between the Han people and Dutch people. The background is an ancient World map showing Taiwan and its geographical relationships with other countries. Photo by Shih-Hui Li.



(Figure 6) The chronological timeline comparing Taiwanese history and World history presents Taiwan within the World system. Photo by Shih-Hui Li.

<sup>357</sup> Interview with Wen-Chen Shih.

### ***Immigrant characteristics and ethnic interactions***

On the basis of the exhibition's narrative account of Taiwan's international interactions during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, *Our Land, Our People* sees Taiwan as a neutral island into which different ethnic groups and political powers enter, one after another. Since the prehistoric period, the Austronesian linguistic groups, Dutch, Spaniards, Japanese and earlier Chinese Han people have all played important roles in Taiwan's story. Following this main storyline, *Our Land, Our People* develops the core theme of the 'immigrant society' further by telling visitors about the formation of Taiwanese Han society and the ethnic interactions between Han people and Taiwan indigenous peoples.

The exhibition's emphasis on Han immigrants and their interactions with indigenous peoples, especially *Pingpuzu* (平埔族), shows that the NMTH has attempted to reconstruct Taiwanese history from a multi-ethnic perspective in order to respond to the social and political need for a plural understanding of identity. By displaying Taiwan as the story of an immigrant nation, the museum's historical narrative proposes to inform citizens that we are all immigrants, and that in this sense, the identification with the land is the common denominator of all groups living in Taiwan.

This part of exhibition mainly recounts Taiwanese history from 1689 when the Qing Dynasty ruled Taiwan, to 1895 when Japan ruled Taiwan as a colony. Taiwan under Qing rule is the period in which Taiwanese Han society formed and matured. Chinese Han immigrants transplanted Chinese culture and social organisation into Taiwan, greatly influencing contemporary Taiwanese society. In presenting this story, *Our Land, Our People* selects the major theme of *Chinese Migration to Taiwan* to present

how the earlier Chinese Han immigrants changed the social structure of Taiwan. Meanwhile, the history of ethnic interactions between Han people and Taiwan's indigenous peoples is also presented in emphasising the historical context of the marginalisation of Taiwan's plains aborigines (*Pingpuzu*). Here, the museum represents a single-mast vessel (Figure 7) anchored in harbour as the main visual focus in 'revealing the story of Han immigrants sailing across the so-called Black Water Ditch (Taiwan Strait)'.<sup>358</sup> The representation of 'A Scene by the Harbour' (Figure 8) represents how the border agencies of the Qing government dealt with newly-arrived immigrants and goods.



(Figure 7) Model of a single-mast vessel arranged at the entrance of the display unit of 'Chinese Migration to Taiwan'. This vessel was used for transporting people and goods between Taiwan and the Mainland China. In the exhibition, this vessel is used as a symbol of the courage of Han people in the Qing Dynasty in searching for the new chances and the new life. Photo by Shih-Hui Li.

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<sup>358</sup> National Museum of Taiwan History, *Guide Book of Our Land, Our People*, 58.



(Figure 8) The Scene by the Harbour. Photo by Shih-Hui Li.

When Chinese Han people immigrated to Taiwan, they first made contact with indigenous peoples who resided in Taiwan's Western plain areas. In the 'Encounter between Chinese Han immigrants and indigenous peoples' section, the exhibition firstly introduces the Qing government's indigenous policies, illustrating how Taiwan's indigenous peoples were defined and classified by those who wielded political power. The Qing government's classification of indigenous peoples provides a significant explanation for the public in understanding the disappearance of the *Pingpuzu* tribes. In the panel 'Leave or Stay', the museum recounts that:

The Qing government categorised the indigene as 'civilised' and 'uncivilised' based on where they lived and if they paid tax, and accepted Chinese civilisation. The indigenous people who lived on the plains [and] often came into contact with Han Chinese were seen as 'civilised'. Plains indigenous people often leased or pawned land to Chinese settlers, and although some chose to leave their traditional territories, others stayed despite the various challenges they faced.<sup>359</sup>

<sup>359</sup> 'Leave or Stay', text panel, *Our Land, Our People*.

This historical narrative reveals two significant ways of understanding Taiwanese indigenous people. In the first place, the Taiwanese general public's understanding of indigenous people derives from Han-centred classification and definitions, and secondly, this historical narrative shows that land leasing constituted a major avenue by which Han people came into contact with indigenous people. Although this text introduces the notion that there were two categories of indigenous peoples – 'civilised' and 'uncivilised' – the museum chooses to tell visitors more about the 'civilised' *Pingpuzu*. In my interview with Mi-Cha Wu, I had asked him to talk about the internal changing process – the construction of the museum's historical narrative. When asked about the selection of issues in the special exhibitions, and the tendency to focus on issues relating to contemporary Taiwanese society, Wu responded:

We had talked about *Pingpuzu*. In all the exhibitions of Taiwanese history, even in the permanent exhibition, *Pingpuzu* has been always emphasised. Why? In talking about Taiwanese history, I firstly positively talk about the indigenous peoples. I use the concept of ethnic migration to describe the encounter between Han immigrants and *Pingpuzu*. This is very important and should be concerned. Furthermore, there are abundant collections about *Pingpuzu* in the National Taiwan Museum and the National Taiwan University which can be used to display this.<sup>360</sup>

In the intellectual context of Taiwanese historical research, the rediscovery of *Pingpuzu*'s historical memories in the 1990s stimulated academic interest, particularly from anthropologists and historians, in reconstructing the forgotten history of the *Pingpuzu* and providing evidence supporting the argument that Taiwanese Han culture

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<sup>360</sup> Interview with Mi-Cha Wu.

is different from Chinese Han culture due to its long-term interactions with *Pingpuzu*.<sup>361</sup> Since research on *Pingpuzu* plays a significant role in presenting Taiwan's ethnic diversity and rewriting marginalised history, the NMTH 'sees the history of ethnic interaction as a core research aim. The NMTH emphasises the reconstruction and re-examination of the history of indigenous peoples, especially *Pingpuzu* which was ignored by governors and comparatively recorded less in written data'.<sup>362</sup>

Owing to the museum's dedication to the research and collection of *Pingpuzu*'s historical memories, the issue of *Pingpuzu* was selected as a central focus in *Our Land, Our People* in presenting ethnic interactions within Taiwan's Island. The whole display focuses on the core issue of how *Pingpuzu* and Han immigrants are 'included in the administrative system of the local government, and thus the traditional ways of life of the indigenes were transformed by Han culture'.<sup>363</sup> In response to this issue, *Our Land, Our People* informs visitors that the transfer of land from *Pingpuzu* tribes to Han settlers, the 'leasing land', was a key factor in enabling indigenous people to be assimilated into Chinese Han culture, losing their own ethnic identity in the process. Through leasing land from indigenous landowners, 'the lands that first belonged to the plain indigenous people were gradually taken over by Han settlers'.<sup>364</sup> In addition to land leasing, under the Qing government's indigenous policies, the original cultural confrontation between Han people and indigenous peoples gradually became cultural integration. The contact with Han people and Chinese culture meant that 'the traditions

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<sup>361</sup> Chang, 'The Search for the Lost Tribes of Formosa'. Wang, *Fifty Years of Taiwanese Historiography*, 165-168. Hsiau, *Reconstructing Taiwan*, 316.

<sup>362</sup> National Museum of Taiwan History, *Glorifying Taiwan*, 160.

<sup>363</sup> National Museum of Taiwan History, *Guide Book of Our Land, Our People*, 62.

<sup>364</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

of the plains indigenous people in the Qing Dynasty were fading or changing'.<sup>365</sup>

Although the display of Taiwan's indigenous peoples occupies a limited percentage of the whole exhibition and there is little reference to 'uncivilised' indigenous peoples, the NMTH actually constructs a coherent story in reconstructing the reason why *Pingpuzu* disappeared in contemporary Taiwanese society, on the basis of the museum's research. Furthermore, through the retelling of the story of the *Pingpuzu* and the narration of the subject of ethnic interactions more broadly, the NMTH proposes to awaken public interest in marginalised history by providing diverse viewpoints through which to view the Taiwanese past.

After telling the story of ethnic interactions, *Our Land, Our People* begins the story of the formation of Taiwanese Han immigrant society in the Qing Dynasty, in which visitors are expected to learn about people's ordinary lives and their interactions with the land. In the display unit 'Territorial Societies and Plural Cultures', the subjects selected by the museum mainly focus on Han immigrants' industrial activities and folk and religious beliefs. This part of the exhibition 'displays the different development of immigrants on the basis of geographical environments and group differences. The visitors will walk along with the line of sea, plains, hills, and towns to understand different local development'.<sup>366</sup> In presenting Han immigrants' living environments, the design of the exhibition uses the settings of 'mountains and fields; irrigation and agriculture; festivals' to present an image of '*Jianan* Plain' (the plain area in present-day Tainan City and Chiayi County, 嘉南平原), the original reclamation area

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<sup>365</sup> 'The Transformation of Plains Indigene Cultures', text panel, *Our Land, Our People*.

<sup>366</sup> National Museum of Taiwan History, *Glorifying Taiwan*, 200.

of the Chinese Han people.<sup>367</sup> The representation of Southern Taiwan's natural and rural environment provides an interactive method of not only attracting visitors' interest, but also evoking their memories through the sense of place.

Continuing the story of interactions between Han immigrants and indigenous peoples in the previous display unit, the museum's historical narrative suggests that a unique Taiwanese culture had been formed during the Qing Dynasty by the cultural integration of different ethnic groups. The story of the *Pingpuzu* presents an introduction to another narrative of Taiwan's plural culture:

After a large number of Chinese immigrated to Taiwan during the Qing Dynasty, a society dominated by this ethnic group was gradually formed on the island. The obstacles created by rivers flowing east and west made travel north and south difficult. Therefore, Chinese immigrants developed different farming methods and cultures by adapting to differences in the natural and man-made environments. These disparate natural environments engendered a variety of community formations, while hometown customs and variance in ethnic distribution generated different industries and cultures. Unique regional societies were thus formed throughout Taiwan.<sup>368</sup>

According to the museum's historical narrative, the purpose of the first part of the display unit is to reconstruct models of ordinary people, such as farmers, fishers and workers in salt fields in order to present the interactions between people and the land. For example, in the 'Inland Sea Fisheries and Magnificent Salt Fields' section (Figure 10), the 'model of a Sugar Mill', and 'Patrolling Irrigation Ditches' represent how the 'residents of coastal areas developed a way of life based on various different ways of

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<sup>367</sup> National Museum of Taiwan History, *Guide Book of Our Land, Our People*, 27.

<sup>368</sup> 'Territorial Societies and Plural Cultures', text panel, *Our Land, Our People*.



production’.<sup>369</sup>



(Figure 9) The scene of Salt Fields. Photo by Shih-Hui Li.

Another part of ‘Territorial Societies and Plural Cultures’ is the display of Taiwanese people’s folk beliefs. In the Qing Dynasty, Han immigrants often ‘brought the deities they worshipped in their hometowns with them, and each Han ethnic group usually has a specific deity’.<sup>370</sup> These different local beliefs helped generate Taiwan’s abundant plural folk religious culture. In these folk beliefs, *Wangye* (王爺) is a popular folk religion in the western coastal areas of Taiwan, which ‘had influence in the consolidating of the various scattered communities within Taiwan and enabling communication among them’.<sup>371</sup> In this part of the exhibition, the museum represents a scene from an important religious procession, *Daitianxunshou* (代天巡狩, Figure 10), the *Wangye*’s tour of inspection. This scene comprises many figures, including

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<sup>369</sup> National Museum of Taiwan History, *Guide Book of Our Land, Our People*, 71.

<sup>370</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

<sup>371</sup> *Ibid.*, 81.

*Baomazai* (a person who walks in front of the procession to announce its arrival) and *Shijiajiang* (the escort for deities in a religious procession, usually comprising four to ten members). Since the religious procession of *Daitianxunshou* is still held in Taiwan's local communities, this could be regarded as a living memory, and the exhibition therefore expects to connect with visitors' memories and folk beliefs through presenting this scene and its models.



(Figure 10) The scene of the religious procession, *Daitianxunshou*. Photo by Shih-Hui Li.

The display of 'Territorial Societies and Plural Cultures' shows that in a new Han immigrant society, the means of establishing a stable social order is the most essential issue for the development of Taiwanese society. In the Qing Dynasty, as Wen-Chen Shih indicated, 'the traditional Chinese political institution had limited power in establishing social order. In this context, it is considered that the local characteristics and order might be shaped by the temples or local communities; the establishment of

social order was not a problem in the Japanese period for Japan is a modern nation-state'.<sup>372</sup> In the next display unit, 'Transformations and the New Order', the museum continues to explore the issue of social order in Taiwanese Han society, with a particular focus on how the Taiwanese social order was established, disciplined and transformed by modernisation during the Japanese period.

***Telling the story of colonial rule: Modernisation, a new social order and the rise of Taiwanese consciousness***

In the traditional China-centred national history, the Japanese past was marginalised for a long time. In the 1980s, many *Dangwai* magazines began to rediscover Japanese colonial history, especially the history of Taiwanese people's resistance movements, arguing that *Dangwai*'s anti-Kuomintang movement formed a part of a tradition of opposition to colonial rule.<sup>373</sup> As the first attempt to reconstruct the Japanese colonial past, the *Dangwai* narrators emphasised the nationalist perspective through the consciousness of the 'Taiwanese people's resistance' and connected this concept to the foreign Kuomintang regime they faced. For *Dangwai*'s narrators and historians, the reconstruction of the Japanese colonial past plays an important role in interpreting the shaping of 'Taiwanese consciousness' and 'the first homogeneous community' on the basis of Taiwanese resistance to rule by other nations. The research and interpretation of political, social and cultural phenomena in the Japanese period has attracted scholarly interest in how to relocate the colonial past within a de-colonised context.<sup>374</sup>

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<sup>372</sup> Interview with Wen-Chen Shih.

<sup>373</sup> Hsiau, *Reconstructing Taiwan*, 295.

<sup>374</sup> Cheng, 'The research on Taiwan history and the review of Taiwanese consciousness'. Wu, 'The Establishment and Issues of Taiwan History'. Chen, *The Resistance and Identity of Taiwanese People*. Hsiau, *Reconstructing Taiwan*.

In telling a general history of Taiwan in the NMTH, the issue of how to present people's lives during the colonial period and evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of colonial rule is also a matter for debate.

In telling the story of the Japanese period, the NMTH uses the title 'Transformations and the New Order' to tell visitors that during the period of Japanese colonial rule, Taiwan was transformed to follow a new direction: the building of a modern political state in which all aspects of Taiwanese people's lives including politics, economics, education and culture changed dramatically. The main storyline of 'Transformations and New Order' is the story of the building of the new Japanese colonial institutions. As the exhibition informs visitors, 'the new Japanese government established a new political system after the Meiji Restoration and managed to control Taiwan's sovereignty, demanding its people to show their loyalty to Japan. This particular way of rule made the Taiwanese experience enormous changes under Japanese control'.<sup>375</sup> According to the historical narrative of the NMTH, it is suggested that the Japanese colonial past is interpreted and evaluated as the major contributor to the progress of Taiwan's modernisation and Westernisation.

Beginning from the outbreak of the first Sino-Japanese War, the NMTH uses a number of panels to tell a brief story of how Japan conquered Taiwan and describes Taiwanese anti-Japanese activities in presenting how Taiwanese people faced rule by 'others'. After conquering the whole island, the Japanese colonial government had started to execute what the museum's historical narrative calls 'modern governance':

The Japanese ruled Taiwan with scientific principles. Including the head of this

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<sup>375</sup> 'Transformations and the New Order', text panel, *Our Land, Our People*.

governance – Office of Governor-General, modern political strategies can be seen from the labour division, such as the professional staff for administrative work, the police and *Baojia* system and schools. Together these became the tools to implement the state power on every aspects [*sic*] of life.<sup>376</sup>

In the modern Japanese state system, the police system was the most important component for maintaining the social order, executing laws and controlling every aspect of people's everyday lives. For older Taiwanese people, an image of the Japanese police is the liveliest way to recall their memories and invite them to participate in the meaning-making process in the museum space. As a symbolic element for the explanation of Taiwan's new order, the NMTH reconstructed a life-size Japanese police office in the gallery, providing a historical space for visitors to experience the new modern political and social order. For visitors who have experienced the Japanese colonial period, this police office acts as a form of interactive media by connecting their life experiences, past memories and visiting experiences.

In addition to the visual focus of the reconstruction in the same way throughout police station, in order to present the effects of modernisation upon people's lives, the museum also designed a stage on which people's urban lives are represented through the reconstruction of Japanese 'street views' and 'stores'. This display also enables the museum to tell the story of Taiwanese modernisation by representing Taiwan's urbanisation and commercial development. Through the reconstruction of street buildings, including a grocery store, a photo studio, a coffee shop and a clinic, the exhibition permits visitors to 'experience the urban life in Japanese period and the fun

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<sup>376</sup> 'Modern Governance', text panel, *Our Land, Our People*.

from the comparison between the past and the present' (Figure 11).<sup>377</sup>

Since the Japanese period is within living memory, Japanese culture and historical buildings have become part of people's ordinary lives. For most museum visitors, and especially those elder ones who experienced the Japanese colonial period first hand, the display of modern history with its reconstruction of the police station, street and stores, links deeply with their past memories. For these elder visitors, it is possible that the historical narratives presented in the panels such as the political institutions, industrial developments or political movements do not interest them as much. However, the models and scenes actually create a sphere in which elder visitors can recall memories and tell their own life experiences – their own historical narratives – to their family members.



(Figure 11) This representation of a street view and the stores of Taipei during the Japanese period shows ordinary people's lives in the context of the rise of modern urban life and mass consumption in Taiwan. Photo by Shih-Hui Li.

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<sup>377</sup> National Museum of Taiwan History, *Glorifying Taiwan*, 201.

In 'Transformations and the New Order', Taiwanese indigenous people's stories are presented again to show visitors how the lives of indigenous peoples were transformed under the rule of the modern state. The Japanese modern state system and its scientific principles are also presented in terms of the development of knowledge about indigenous peoples. In contrast to the passive management of the indigenous peoples in the Qing Dynasty, 'the modern nation-state of Japan actively stretched its power into the mountain areas'.<sup>378</sup> In the section 'Indigenes and a Modern Nation-State', visitors firstly encounter objects and historical stories about indigenous peoples in mountain areas. The exhibition presents Mountain Indigenous peoples in the context of Japanese indigenous policies in which the museum-narrator tells the story of how the Japanese colonial government collected the data of Taiwan's indigenous peoples using anthropological field research; in the meantime it scientifically applied its knowledge of indigenous peoples to effectively control these tribes. Due to cultural conflicts between the modern state system and tribal culture, the exhibition tells visitors that Taiwan's mountain indigenous peoples were included in the colonial system and that some of the indigenous elites therefore gradually fostered a sense of self-identity.<sup>379</sup>

In addition to the execution of colonial control over the Taiwanese people, in presenting Taiwan's modernisation, the exhibition chooses the subject of 'Enterprises and New Industries' to show how Japan established Taiwan's industrialisation. Under this subject heading, the museum introduces related issues such as the construction of power stations, the rise of agricultural production, the development of the new sugar industry, the exploitation of forest resources and the development of fishery by using

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<sup>378</sup> National Museum of Taiwan History, *Guide Book of Our Land, Our People*, 89.

<sup>379</sup> 'Indigenes and a Modern Nation State', text panel, *Our Land, Our People*.

panels and models to communicate multiple aspects of Taiwanese industrial history. All these new industrial developments, like the new political and social orders, signify that Taiwan had been

[...] seen as the production centre for tropical crops and rice to meet the needs of Japan. In the late 1930's [*sic*], the development policy of Taiwan started aiming at industrialisation. During the wartime, various armed industries were built to support war, and additionally grounded the foundations of future industrialisation in Taiwan.<sup>380</sup>

Following the main storyline of Taiwan's modernisation, after presenting the progress of industries under colonial rule, the museum-narrator directs its attention to the building of the modern education system and the rise of modern culture in urban areas of Taiwan. In the story of 'Modern Education and Culture', the NMTH narrates:

The Office of the Governor-General tried to bring up enough human resources to aid the Japanese government by introducing a modern education system. However, this education also opened a window to the world for members of [the] Taiwanese elite. They absorbed elements of modern Western civilisation while developing the basis of a specifically Taiwan ideology [*sic*]. With modern education, a modern culture was thus formed in urban areas in Taiwan.<sup>381</sup>

According to the museum's narratives of Japanese industrial construction and the education system, it is suggested that the exhibition chooses to tell the story of Taiwan's modernisation within the context of colonial rule. The transformations described are interpreted as largely serving the needs of the Japanese government; it is in this colonial position that Taiwanese people had begun to realise the difference

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<sup>380</sup> 'Enterprises and New Order', text panel, *Our Land, Our People*.

<sup>381</sup> 'Modern Education and Culture', text panel, *Our Land, Our People*.



between the Taiwanese and the Japanese and had gradually developed a unique Taiwanese consciousness in struggling for greater political rights.

Taiwan's political and social movements during the 1920s played significant roles in shaping 'Taiwanese consciousness' and are regarded as the origins of 'Taiwanese nationalism'.<sup>382</sup> As the most important political movement, the actions of the 'Taiwan Cultural Association' (台灣文化協會), are described in the exhibition, which states that 'the association tried to enlighten Taiwanese people and demanded that the Office of the Governor-General improve their political rights, leading to the establishment of many political and social movements in Taiwan'.<sup>383</sup> By displaying representative Taiwanese media such as *The Formosa* magazine (台灣青年, 1923) and *Taiwan Minpao* (*Taiwanese People's Newspaper*, 台灣民報), the exhibition conveys how the Taiwanese élites used the media as tools in 'introducing new knowledge, criticising political affairs and cooperating with political movements and groups'.<sup>384</sup>

As essential elements in the construction of a national discourse, 'Taiwanese consciousness' and 'Taiwanese identity' form the core interpretive strategies in defining the uniqueness of Taiwanese people and Chinese people. In the story of 'Political and Social Movements' in the Japanese period, there is actually a hidden narrative of the rise of Taiwanese identity and Taiwanese resistance movements.<sup>385</sup> According to the presentation of the Japanese period in *Our Land, Our People*, it is suggested that the museum-narrator attempts to convey the historical discourse that the

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<sup>382</sup> Cheng, 'The research on Taiwan history and the review of Taiwanese consciousness'. Wu, 'The Establishment and Issues of Taiwan History'. Chen, *The Resistance and Identity of Taiwanese People*.

<sup>383</sup> 'Political and Social Movements', text panel, *Our Land, Our People*.

<sup>384</sup> 'Taiwanese Media', text panel, *Our Land, Our People*.

<sup>385</sup> Chen, *The Resistance and Identity of Taiwanese People*.

Japanese colonial government planned to shape Japanese identity and transformed the Taiwanese people into Japanese citizens. For this reason, Taiwanese identity as an anti-discourse had been constructed in the Japanese period. Although the exhibition does not tell visitors about the rise of Taiwanese identity directly, it is actually presented in the museum's historical narratives if we interpret it within the context of Taiwanese historical research.

### ***Conclusion***

Taiwan's democratisation is the most significant development of the post-war period. In the previous two chapters, I used Taiwan's democratisation as the main storyline with which to narrate the reconstruction of Taiwanese history and the rise of multi-ethnic culture in contemporary Taiwan's constitutional framework. Owing to political democratisation, Taiwanese history, as a new national historical discourse, had been empowered to challenge the traditional China-centred national discourse using diverse historical insights; through Taiwan's democratisation, the building of the NMTH became possible.

In this chapter, I continued the argument of the previous two chapters by surveying the exhibition *Our Land, Our People: The Story of Taiwan* in the context of contemporary democratisation. Interpreting Taiwanese history as a new national historical discourse and a new national imagination, I considered firstly that *Our Land, Our People* illustrates the transformation from the rise of Taiwanese historical research in the past 40 years to the NMTH's historical narratives. The process of the shaping of the museum's historical narrative is the process of constructing text in which different

staff members change, revise, add and delete the content of the exhibition at different stages. The professional selection of subjects and plots allows *Our Land, Our People* to present itself as the sum of expert knowledge. Using history as a governing expert knowledge, I argue that the NMTH aims to shape a new national identity by retelling Taiwanese history. Secondly, in order to understand how the NMTH shapes this new national identity for the public, I analysed how the exhibition defines the meaning of both 'Taiwan' and 'Taiwanese people'. In exploring the presentation of identity at the NMTH, I suggest that the museum's method of dealing with the issue of national identity is in accordance with Taiwan's social common consensus: the plural understanding of national identity. Through emphasising the identification with Taiwan and the land, the NMTH takes an inclusive, soft, elastic, safe and politically correct way of telling visitors (national or international) that the 'Taiwanese people' constitutes a multi-ethnic concept; that 'Taiwanese people' share a common geographical area and historical past, while the future of Taiwan should be discussed publicly by the 'Taiwanese people'. In defining the 'geographical boundary' (Taiwan's Island) and the nation (Taiwanese people), it is suggested that the NMTH, as a history-maker, actually attempts to construct a new national history and a new national imagination in *Our Land, Our People*, which meets the needs of a diverse and democratic Taiwanese society.

On the premise of the construction of national history, the NMTH chooses to tell Taiwanese story from ordinary people's perspectives. On the one hand, the display politics of social history reflect the rise of social history in Taiwanese historical research since the 1970s; on the other hand, the representation of dioramas, models,

historical buildings and street views in the exhibition create an interactive world in which visitors are expected to connect the present with the past more easily by recalling their personal memories. If the NMTH and its inclusive national history are the products of a democratic Taiwanese society, the creation of a public sphere in which visitors can produce their own meaning through recalling their memories of the past can also be interpreted as part of the process of democratisation.

However, the interrelationships between the exhibition and its visitors raise questions about

[...] production (encoding/ writing) and consumption (decoding/ reading), as well as content (text) and the interrelationships between these. It is an approach which leads to important questions about the determination of meaning and the distribution of the power to define in exhibitions.<sup>386</sup>

In the text of *Our Land, Our People*, although the NMTH announces its emphasis on ordinary people's lives, the main power of narration is still controlled by the museum-narrator and people's viewpoints and their stories occupy a relatively low percentage. As to the empowerment of people in telling his or her own history, it is suggested that *Our Land, Our People* represents the excessive power of museum professionals in guiding the meaning of the exhibition.

Moreover, as a new Taiwanese story based on the concept of Taiwan's ethnic diversity, the presentation of the histories of various ethnic groups is largely ignored in *Our Land, Our People*. In the exhibition, visitors are expected to see the ethnic interactions between Chinese Han people and *Pingpuzu* and Japanese indigenous

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<sup>386</sup> Macdonald, 'Exhibitions of power and powers of exhibition', 4.

policies. However, visitors cannot see the history of indigenous peoples in mountain areas, and the exhibition also lacks the historical narratives of other Han people groups such as Hakka and *Waishengren*. For visitors from various ethnic groups, only the presentation of historical knowledge can be seen, rather than the stories or memories from each ethnic group. The method of presenting Taiwan's ethnic diversity in the exhibition opens up questions about how the NMTH can possibly form a public forum for dealing with the plural understanding of national identity in Taiwan and what the NMTH can do to provide a public space for the presentation of diverse voices and historical memories.

## Chapter 4

### People's Voices: Reading Taiwanese History in the Museum

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#### *Museum visitors are readers and meaning-makers*

In the previous chapters, I combined academic historical research with the professional opinions of museum staff to analyse how the NMTH, as a history-making institution, constructs a new Taiwanese historical narrative in the exhibition *Our Land, Our People: The Story of Taiwan*. The discussion of how the NMTH collects, studies, interprets and displays Taiwanese history in a single exhibition illustrates how the NMTH can be perceived as an author of Taiwanese history, which represents its specific epistemological, ethical, political, and ideological choices in the exhibition-text.<sup>387</sup> Focussing on 'the personal connections visitors may make with modes of presentation and ways to think about exhibits',<sup>388</sup> this chapter proposes to alter the perspective of the research from the museum's professional history-making processes to the non-professional ways in which museum visitors see the past and make their own meaning in responding to the historical insights furnished by the museum. By interviewing museum visitors who visited *Our Land, Our People*, and presenting their nostalgic emotional responses to the elements of the exhibition, this chapter proposes to investigate not only the relations between the museum-author, exhibition-text and readers-visitors, but also whether the public role of the NMTH in anchoring the new Taiwanese national imagination satisfies the common consensus of contemporary Taiwanese society.

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<sup>387</sup> Alun Munslow, *Narrative and History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

<sup>388</sup> George E. Hein, *Learning in the Museum* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 163.

In criticising the educational functions of constructivist museums which overuse authoritative methods of providing museum visitors with useful information and expert discourses, Lois H. Silverman reminds us that personal and subjective ways of meaning-making should play important roles in de-centralising museums' professional discourses:

In striving to educate visitors and to develop 'museum literate' people who know how to view and appreciate objects according to specific paradigms, we as museum professionals have long overfocused on the task of providing visitors information, facilitating the traditional or 'expert' discourses as aspects of visitors' meaning making processes, such as their abilities to see formal elements in artwork, or to provide historical context for artifacts from the past. In the process, the more personal and subjective ways in which visitors make meaning (such as through life experiences, opinions, imagination, memories, and fantasies) are at best ignored and more often invalidated in museums, where they tend to be regarded as naive and inappropriate.<sup>389</sup>

Silverman's argument permits this chapter to hypothesise that in the process of visiting museums and exhibition-texts, museum visitors actively participate in the behaviours of reading, digesting and remaking rather than negatively accepting the information provided by museums.<sup>390</sup> In Taiwan, visitor studies is a comparatively new research area that emerged with the development of large public museums in the 1980s. According to Chi-Hsian Wang's (王啟祥) review of visitor studies in Taiwanese

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<sup>389</sup> Lois, H. Silverman, 'Visitor meaning-making in museums for a new age', *Curator* 38 (3) (1995), 165. Cited in Hein, *Learning in the Museum*, 163-164.

<sup>390</sup> Susan A. Crane, 'Memory, distortion, and history in the museum' in *Museum Studies: An Anthology of Contexts*, ed. B. Carbonell (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2004). Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, 'Education, postmodernity and the museum', in Knell, MacLeod, and Watson, *Museum Revolutions*, 367-377. Chia-Li Chen, 'Museums and the shaping of cultural identities: Visitors' recollections in local museums in Taiwan', in *Museum Revolutions: How Museums Change and are Changed*, ed. Simon J. Knell, *et al.*, 173-188. Wan-Cheng Chang, *The Narrative Turn of Contemporary Museum Exhibition* (Taipei: Yuan-Liou Publishing Company, 2014).

museums, the majority of early visitor studies in Taiwan aimed to evaluate the demographics and behavioural modes of museum visitors. These early studies of museum visitors mainly applied quantitative research methods by analysing the statistics of 'the amount of museum visitors and their degree of satisfaction with the museum they visited'.<sup>391</sup> Qualitative research on museum visitors' 'interaction with exhibitions, learning activities, and their visiting experiences' was rare in comparison and developed later, after the 1990s.<sup>392</sup>

In collecting museum visitors' visiting experiences and their responses to the museum or exhibition, the in-depth interview approach empowers museum visitors to express their opinions positively and helps them feel free and confident in telling their own stories.<sup>393</sup> In studying local museums and the shaping of visitors' local cultural identities, Chia-Li Chen (陳佳利) conducted in-depth interviews with visitors to five local museums in Taiwan. By presenting different types of visitors' memories triggered by museum buildings and objects, Chen argued that 'visitors themselves make sense of, interpret and construct meanings in the museum'.<sup>394</sup> Focusing on visitors' visiting experiences and their individual meaning-making behaviour, Chen's research shows that 'the local museum is a significant site through which local residents construct a sense of locally and knowledge of themselves through their

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<sup>391</sup> Chi-Hsian Wang, 'The review on Visitor Studies in Taiwan', *The Journal of Museology* 18 (2) (Taichung: National Museum of Natural Science, 2004), 100.

<sup>392</sup> Wang, 'The review on Visitor Studies in Taiwan', 100. According to Wang's statistics, during 1981-1990, there were 3 papers using quantitative research methods and none using qualitative research approaches; during 1991-2000, research on visitor studies had developed and there were 31 papers using quantitative research approaches while 6 papers used qualitative research methods; during 2001-2002, 22 papers are classified as quantitative research and 6 papers are classified as qualitative research (*Ibid.*, 101).

<sup>393</sup> Chia-Li Chen, 'The discussion of qualitative visitor studies: Ideas and methods', *The Newsletter of Chinese Association of Museums* 63 (2013), 6-9.

<sup>394</sup> Chen, 'Museums and the shaping of cultural identities', 175.



memories’.<sup>395</sup>

The most recent example of in-depth interviews with museum visitors is Wan-Chen Chang’s (張婉真) research on the interactions between exhibition narratives and museum visitors’ reading behaviours. In her research, Chang analyses the efficacy of displaying ‘substitutes’ in place of real objects in *Our Land, Our People*, and conducts interviews with museum visitors in order to understand the ‘interrelations between the figurative meaning of substitutes and visitors’ reading’.<sup>396</sup> Based on the idea of seeing the exhibition as a text composed of various elements such as labels, panels, videos, pictures and audio guidance, Chang proposes to investigate whether the arrangement of these elements in the exhibition provides an ideal text environment for visitors to construct their own meaning.<sup>397</sup> As Chang points out:

When a visitor is entering into an exhibition space, he/she has to construct meanings using various kinds of elements in the exhibition. The most exhibitions are composed of three worlds: the first one is the fictitious world of the exhibition itself. The second one is the real world where the objects came from. The third one is the fictitious world that is formed by the recombination of objects. Although it is found that visitors usually have difficulties in responding to exhibitions, it is imperative to recognise that visitors should be empowered to give meanings to the arrangement of objects.<sup>398</sup>

According to Chang, in order to determine whether an exhibition can be regarded as a readable text, both the arrangement of exhibition objects and visitors’ acts of meaning

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<sup>395</sup> *Ibid.*, 187.

<sup>396</sup> Wan-Cheng Chang, *The Narrative Turn of Contemporary Museum Exhibition* (Taipei: Yuan-Liou Publishing Company, 2014), 203.

<sup>397</sup> Chang, *The Narrative Turn of Contemporary Museum Exhibition*, 190.

<sup>398</sup> *Ibid.*, 190.

construction should be considered.<sup>399</sup>

In the exhibition *Our Land, Our People*, a considerable amount of substitute objects such as dioramas, models and human figures are displayed in order to construct Taiwanese history as an interwoven world combining fictitious elements and real objects. In conducting interviews with 16 visitors who visited the exhibition, Chang suggests that the use of different display elements could form a readable and acceptable text environment in which museum visitors could interact with the exhibition narrative in a livelier manner than by merely reading panel texts. According to Chang's analysis, it is demonstrated that the display strategy of combining substitutes and real objects in *Our Land, Our People* does not cause any reading barriers for visitors in allocating personal meanings to the reconstructed world and its arrangement of various objects and exhibition elements.<sup>400</sup>

### ***The Research Design***

Influenced by Chen and Chang's studies, the first objective of the visitor study explored in this chapter is to investigate how the personal memories and identity of the individual visitor are presented in his or her narrative-making (or storytelling). Within this framework of personal narratives, the second objective goes a step further to examine individual visitors' sense of identity within the greater framework of national identity in investigating whether the 'Taiwanese identity' defined by the NMTH is acceptable for visitors. By doing so, this visitor study reveals to what degree the NMTH meets social needs in a democratic and multicultural Taiwanese society.

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<sup>399</sup> *Ibid.*, 190.

<sup>400</sup> *Ibid.*, 208-211.

From 13 – 19 April 2014, I conducted interviews with 25 museum visitors at the exit of the *Our Land, Our People* exhibition gallery at the NMTH, which means all 25 visitors were interviewed after visiting the exhibition. All the interviewees were adult visitors and were selected randomly. The interviewees were asked to provide information on their backgrounds, including their gender, age, educational level, ethnicity and where they came from. The complete background information of the interviewees is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Background information of the interviewees

<i>Visitor</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Ethnicity</i>	<i>Residential Area</i>
V-1	Male	26	University	Bensheng	Tainan City
V-2	Male	58	College	Waisheng	Kaohsiung City
V-3	Female	21	University	Waisheng	Taipei City
V-4	Male	57	University	Bensheng	Tainan City
V-5	Male	43	College	Bensheng	Tainan City
V-6	Male	23	University	Bensheng	Kaohsiung City
V-7	Female	55	Senior High School	Waisheng	Tainan City
V-8	Male	50	Senior High School	Bensheng	Hsinchu City
V-9	Male	45	University	Bensheng	Tainan City
V-10	Female	40	University	Bensheng	Tainan City
V-11	Female	53	University	Waisheng	Taoyuan City
V-12	Female	Not provided	Post Graduate	Chinese citizen	Shanghai City, China
V-13	Female	31	University	Bensheng	Tainan City
V-14	Male	29	University	Bensheng	Tainan City
V-15	Male	23	University	Bensheng	Tainan City
V-16	Female	24	Post Graduate	Bensheng	Tainan City
V-17	Female	27	Post Graduate	Bensheng	Tainan City
V-18	Male	27	Post Graduate	Bensheng	Tainan City
V-19	Male	60	Post Graduate	Bensheng	Kaohsiung City
V-20	Male	36	Post Graduate	Waisheng	Tainan City
V-21	Male	33	University	Bensheng	Tainan City
V-22	Female	26	University	Bensheng	Tainan City
V-23	Female	62	Primary School	Bensheng	New Taipei City
V-24	Male	36	University	Bensheng	Tainan City
V-25	Female	63	Senior High School	Bensheng	Taipei City

Table 1 shows that female visitors occupy 44% of the sample, while male visitors constitute 56%; the age range of visitors shows that 36% of interviewees were under 30 years old, while 16% of interviewees were between 30 to 40 years of age, with 48% of interviewees over 40 years of age. The ethnicity of interviewees shows that 20% are *Waishengren*, while nearly 80% are *Benshengren*. The column showing visitors' residential areas reveals that a high percentage (72%) of interviewees come from Tainan City, in which the NMTH is situated.<sup>401</sup>

Analysing interviewees' backgrounds in a Taiwanese context, this study hypothesises that the factors of age and ethnicity play key roles in shaping visitors' prior knowledge and historical consciousness in terms of their ways of understanding the Taiwanese past and their sense of identity with Taiwan. Firstly, with the promotion of *Bentuhua* education and the focus on Taiwanese subjectivity since the 1990s, Taiwanese history has been constructed as a new expertise and has gradually played an important role in high school historical education in anchoring the new Taiwanese national imagination for the younger generations.<sup>402</sup> The paradigmatic transformation of national history in Taiwan has generated different ways of understanding and interpreting the Taiwanese past for the two generations who were taught different national discourses. In this context, this study expects to demonstrate from the

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<sup>401</sup> The statistical data of visitors' residential areas reflects the achievement of the long-term audience marketing strategy of the NMTH. Since the NMTH is located in Tainan, the visitor management strategy principally focuses on citizens from Tainan. The sequence of establishing advertisements and internet relations operates from the core (Tainan) to Kaohsiung (高雄), and then Chiayi (嘉義), Pingtung (屏東), Yunlin (雲林) and other cities in northern Taiwan (Hsu (2011), 192). According to museum curator Shih Wen-Chen's interview data, Shih indicates that in considering the factor of distance, the NMTH now mainly cooperates with schools and institutions in the Tainan area to conduct field trips and workshops (Interview with Wen-Chen Shih).

<sup>402</sup> Fu-Chan Wang, 'National Imagination, Ethnic Consciousness and History: The Content and Contextual Analysis of the Controversy of *Renshi Taiwan* Textbooks', *Taiwan Historical Research* 8 (2) (2001), 145-208. Wang, *Fifty Years of Taiwanese Historiography*.

interview data how visitors with a different historical consciousness shaped by their high school historical education respond to the Taiwanese history presented at the NMTH.

Secondly, the categorising of visitors' ethnic cultural backgrounds is in accordance with the prototype of the 'four ethnic groups' which signifies the 'Taiwanese people' as a major ethnic group composed of the four minor groups of *Hoklo (Benshengren)*, *Hakka*, *Waishengren* and Indigenous People.<sup>403</sup> Although in the context of contemporary Taiwan's plural national identity, discrimination between the four ethnic groups has been largely dismantled and recombined into one diverse group: 'Taiwanese people', this study argues that this old ethnic discourse is still effective, especially for elder visitors, in showing whether specific ethnic cultures and collective memories can form sources of individual ways of seeing the Taiwanese past.

In my study of museum visitors, all interviewees were asked to respond to four open-ended questions after they visited the exhibition:

1. Please compare the Taiwanese history displayed in the exhibition *Our Land, Our People* with the Taiwanese history you have learned in high schools and try to tell the differences between them.
2. Did you find any memories or life experiences in the objects displayed in the exhibition *Our Land, Our People*? Please share your stories with me.
3. In the beginning of the exhibition *Our Land, Our People* the National Museum of Taiwan History tells the visitors 'who are Taiwanese'. Did you read it? If you read it, do you agree with the definition or could you please share your opinions about 'Taiwanese people' with me?
4. After visiting *Our Land, Our People*, are there any insufficiencies of the exhibition in representing stories of other ethnic groups, such as *Hakka*, Indigenous Peoples,

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<sup>403</sup> The *White Paper on Policies of the Democratic Progress Party* (1993), 79. Wakabayashi, *The Progress of Taiwanisation*, 406.

*Waishengren*, or new immigrants?

Through analysing and presenting individual interviewees' opinions and stories in this chapter, I propose to categorise and present interviewees' oral data from three perspectives. Firstly, compared to the fragmentary and theme-based historical narratives in historical textbooks, it is significant for this study to investigate the generation of new reading experiences when visitors encounter and read the comprehensive and coherent narrative approach of the exhibition. Secondly, through presenting interviewees' personal memories triggered by the reconstructed exhibition world, this research also attempts to discover the personal processes of meaning-making and memory recall. Lastly, focusing on the interactions between memory, story and identity, I focus on examining how museum visitors respond to the museum's definition of the 'Taiwanese people', meanwhile revealing what 'Taiwanese identity' means to them when facing a multicultural and multi-ethnic contemporary Taiwanese society.

***The coherent historical narrative of Our Land, Our People provides visitors with new experiences of understanding Taiwanese history***

The first question is raised by the educational functions of the permanent exhibition. In providing a learning space for the general public and students, the NMTH deploys diverse viewpoints and a lively display design to present information which is new or ignored in historical textbooks.<sup>404</sup> In talking about the display strategies of the museum's permanent exhibition in teaching visitors about the Taiwanese past, curator

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<sup>404</sup> National Museum of Taiwan History, *The Annual Report of the National Museum of Taiwan History 2012*, 127.

Min-Shan Jiang said:

The design of the exhibition is visual-guided in which the museum arranges considerable dioramas and figures. Comparing to the traditional objects-guided exhibition, we think the lively visual-guided display design could enhance visitors' impressions of the past and attract their attentions to other new aspects of Taiwanese history. As to the historical scope, the exhibition is more elastic than textbooks. We can deal with the historical viewpoints we would like to talk about. We hope to talk about Taiwanese history from new angles in order to break visitors' images of Taiwan that was taught in classrooms.<sup>405</sup>

Jiang's words show the NMTH's expectations of offering new ways of seeing the Taiwanese past for its visitors. Through constructing the exhibition world interwoven with substitutes and real objects, it is suggested that the NMTH attempts to provide new visiting experiences focusing on telling stories rather than merely visiting antiques in museums or reading historical textbooks in classrooms. From the interview data, the display politics and the lively ways of representing Taiwanese history have the potential to be accepted by visitors and provide them with easier and clearer ways to understand Taiwan. For example, as interviewees *V-4* and *V-6* said:

The textbook is the presentation of written words. Come here and you can see models, wax, and dioramas which represent historical pictures using lively ways. The display here can deepen your impression with Taiwanese history. I usually see many children come to visit the exhibition and feel surprised that the historical scenes here represent visually what they read in textbooks. I think this exhibition could provide lively illustrations to teach them more than historical classes.<sup>406</sup>

This exhibition is more detailed than history classes. There are no pictures and

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<sup>405</sup> Interview with Ming-Shan Jiang.

<sup>406</sup> Interview with *V-4*.



videos in classes. The coordination of panels, pictures, and models enables me to imagine the past more easily (*V-6*).<sup>407</sup>

When visitors experienced a historical world interwoven with substitutes and real objects in an open and coherent gallery space, the interview data shows that the majority of interviewees enjoyed the visual representation of historical knowledge more than what they had read in historical textbooks. Many interviewees pointed out that a coherent historical narrative including a beginning, middle and end could help them to shape a clearer historical image of Taiwan. As interviewees *V-2* and *V-11* said:

Comparing to what I had learned in high schools, the Taiwanese history presented in this exhibition could make me easier to know the comprehensive historical development of Taiwan. The Taiwanese history written in textbooks is merely limited within certain parts.<sup>408</sup>

After visiting the exhibition, I feel it is clearer for me to know Taiwanese history. Taiwanese history I learned before was fragmentary. Taiwan is my birthplace and I am also living here now. I thought that I knew a lot about Taiwanese history and never paid attention to the problems of the ways of writing Taiwanese history in the textbooks. The experience of visiting the exhibition enables me to understand that what I knew about Taiwan was fragmentary. The comprehensive story from the beginning to the end is more appropriate for me to know Taiwan.<sup>409</sup>

When comparing the exhibition narrative with what they have learned in history classes, a high proportion of interviewees recognised the museum's coherent and chronological approaches to presenting Taiwanese history. The interview data shows that a coherent historical narrative not only satisfies visitors' personal psychological

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<sup>407</sup> Interview with *V-6*.

<sup>408</sup> Interview with *V-2*.

<sup>409</sup> Interview with *V-11*.

needs for understanding the holistic progress from the pre-historical period to contemporary Taiwan, but also provides enough source materials for visitors to construct their own meaning and viewpoints about Taiwanese history.<sup>410</sup>

***Different visiting experiences between the two generations who are taught with Chinese history and Taiwanese history separately***

For different generations who are taught different historical narratives in schools, the interview data also shows that with sufficient prior knowledge of Taiwanese history, the majority of the themes and stories presented in the exhibition are more familiar to interviewees under the age of 30 than those over 30. For the former, the exhibition story can easily be compared with the function of textbooks, and be used as a supplement for the insufficiency of what they learned at school.

For the older generation who were taught Chinese history in high school, the interview data indicates that visiting the NMTH's exhibition of Taiwanese history constitutes a comparatively new experience for them and allows them to construct more personal meanings when responding to the exhibition text. For example, interviewees *V-4* (57 years old), *V-5* (43 years old) and *V-9* (45 years old) all mention their new understanding of the Taiwanese past:

In our own period, the greater part of history we read was Chinese history and Chinese geography. The description of Taiwan was less. Although *Bentuhua* has affected historical education in recent years, the presentation of Taiwanese history in textbooks is only written words. I can see lively display of Taiwanese history

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<sup>410</sup> Straub, 'Telling stories, making history'. Polkinghorne, 'Narrative psychology and historical consciousness'.

here and knowing Taiwanese history in the museum is a new experience for me.<sup>411</sup>

I had not read so much Taiwanese history when I was a high school student. In my history classes, all I knew about Taiwan were Japanese colonial period and the Retrocession of Taiwan. The exhibition provides me considerable new historical knowledge about Taiwan that I did not know before.<sup>412</sup>

I think this exhibition could allow the public to understand more about Taiwanese past. There were less mentioned about Taiwan in the past textbooks. Many parts of Taiwanese history taught in classes were superficial. For example, the description of the Japanese colonial rule merely focused on political aspects and lacks of people's life. The presentation of the life of early Taiwanese residents and cultural context presented in this exhibition is really useful and new for me.<sup>413</sup>

In addition to describing their new experiences of learning Taiwanese history when visiting the exhibition, some other interviewees also mention how Chinese history education in the past hindered students' understanding of Taiwanese history. As interviewee *V-24* said:

Taiwanese history I knew before was the history marginalised by the government for a long time. For the government did not allow the public to know real and comprehensive Taiwanese history, what I knew before was fragmentary historical facts which were reconstructed by the government. This exhibition enables me to know the entire historical development systematically and coherently. [...] Historical education in my junior high school was partial because students were taught with Chinese historical view. Students could not know Taiwanese history clearly but know Chinese history very well for they needed to take examinations.<sup>414</sup>

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<sup>411</sup> Interview with *V-4*.

<sup>412</sup> Interview with *V-5*.

<sup>413</sup> Interview with *V-9*.

<sup>414</sup> Interview with *V-24*.

From the interview data, it is suggested that for most interviewees, a coherent Taiwanese history is attractive and interesting to read. Compared to the fragmentary Taiwanese history learned in the classroom or received from other media, representing a coherent and sequenced historical narrative in one open gallery space can provide visitors with a new experience through which to encounter the Taiwanese past. Comprising various kinds of interactive display elements, the exhibition which presents a coherent and comprehensive Taiwanese history can offer a wider range of sources than books through which visitors can remember something related to their life experiences, and, as a result, they can more easily find his or her own position within a common historical memory.

Moreover, through connecting interviewees' opinions about Taiwanese history with their different prior knowledge, the interview data shows that visitors of the younger generation who are familiar with Taiwanese history pay more attention to the coherent historical story and lively representation of Taiwanese past through models and dioramas. For those belonging to the older generation who learned less Taiwanese history in school, they show much interest in the fresh stories and knowledge of the Taiwanese past and enjoy the new learning experiences that the exhibition offers.



(Figure 12) A view from the exit of the exhibition gallery *Our Land, Our People: The Story of Taiwan*. The photo shows that there are many large landscape elements in this open gallery space. When visitors finish their journey through the story, they can stand opposite the gallery and review what they have just seen. This exhibition design offers visitors a second opportunity to recall memories and share stories with their friends or family members. Photo by Shih-Hui Li.

### ***Memory and life experiences***

As to the relationship between people's memories and objects, curator Min-Shan Jiang suggests that one important purpose of the NMTH is to recall visitors' memories with objects from people's ordinary lives. Through

[...] connecting memories with museum objects and the deployment of various exhibition elements, the NMTH encourages the elder members of a family to share memories and life experiences with the younger generations by telling stories in the gallery space of *Our Land, Our People*'.<sup>415</sup>

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<sup>415</sup> Interview with Min-Shan Jiang.

When asking interviewees to choose which part of the exhibition was the most interesting and could best help them recall their memories, the interview data indicates that the three display units ‘Territorial Societies and Plural Culture’ (the Qing Dynasty), ‘Transformations and the New Order’ (the Japanese colonial period) and ‘Towards a Diverse, Democratic Society’ (post-war Taiwan) provide more connecting elements to link visitors’ past memories and their present life experiences. It is in these three display units that the NMTH presents a considerable number of models, human figures, dioramas, reconstructed historical buildings and street views which aim to attract visitors’ interest.<sup>416</sup>

Through analysing and presenting individual interviewees’ stories which are composed of memories and life experiences, this study proposes to discover firstly whether the arrangement of exhibition elements constructs a memory-evoking environment which offers source materials for visitors to transform historical time (the real time of the past) into narrative time (storied time) via the emplotment of the different elements of the story.<sup>417</sup> Moreover, as the processes of personal memory and meaning-making are not absolute personal psychological operations but are affected by particular political, social and cultural structures,<sup>418</sup> this study also attempts to connect interviewees’ personal stories with the broader social context in showing how different contexts influence the individual interviewee’s acts of storytelling.

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<sup>416</sup> Chen, ‘The designing concept of the permanent exhibition’, in *Guide Book of Our Land, Our People*, 29.

<sup>417</sup> Munslow, *Narrative and History*, 53.

<sup>418</sup> Halbwachs, ‘The reconstruction of the past’. Connerton, *How Societies Remember*.

*The Japanese past is still a living history for older visitors who experienced life in the Japanese period*

For many interviewees whose parents or grandparents experienced life in the Japanese period, the display of the 'Japanese colonial period' triggers the interviewees' and their parents' memories the most. For example, interviewee *V-4* describes how his mother found her own memories when visiting the exhibition:

I have visited the exhibition with my mother for many times. [...] When we visited the gallery of the Japanese period, my mother was very interested in the display of the Japanese school for she had school life experiences in that period. When we went to the area of the Japanese city and street houses, the rebuilding of modern coffee shops and grocery shops triggered her memory because those street views and stores are parts of her life experiences. [...] I remember that at the end of the gallery, there displays a photo which records the image of a group of Taiwanese young people who were recruited to the Japanese army during the WWII. My mother told me that my uncle had been recruited for the war and she also had a similar photo. I think the display of the Japanese period triggers her memory much more than other periods for she had lived in that period.<sup>419</sup>

Another interviewee, *V-19*, recounts a family story about his grandfather when his childhood memories were triggered by the representation of the Japanese police station:

What impressed me most is the Japanese period. My parents were educated in the Japanese educational system and had studied in Japan. For this reason I spoke the Japanese language in my childhood. My grandfather was a Japanese policeman. After the war, all Japanese in Taiwan had been repatriated back to Japan and my grandfather also went back. However, my grandfather told me he could not abandon his family in Taiwan, so he applied to renounce his Japanese nationality

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<sup>419</sup> Interview *V-4*.

and came back to Taiwan for his wife and children. During my childhood, I have heard many stories about my grandfather from my mother and I can also see many of his items such as the uniform of a Japanese policeman [...] When I see the police station here every time, I always remember those childhood memories.<sup>420</sup>



(Figure 13) Representation of the Japanese police station and figures of Japanese police officers in the display unit 'Transformations and the New Order'. Used as a special gallery space, the police station displays the laws of governing Taiwanese people and the duties of police officers. When visitors enter into the police station, they will enter a fictitious historical world created by the museum and can experience the atmosphere of the Japanese new order. There is a seat among the wax figures and visitors can take photos with these Japanese police officers. Photo by Shih-Hui Li.

Besides sharing memories and life experiences with elder family members, some other interviewees who did not experience Japanese rule also express their interest. In contrast to linking directly to life experiences and personal memories, these interviewees show a high level of identification with the representation of Japanese street views and stores in the exhibition. Since Japanese architecture has been preserved as cultural heritage in contemporary Taiwan, colonial culture and colonial

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<sup>420</sup> Interview with V-19.



experiences are preserved in many historical buildings while the original functions and meanings of these buildings have been transformed by modern use. In this sense, although most interviewees do not possess life experiences of the Japanese period, the Japanese past can still be understood as part of their living memories.<sup>421</sup> Interviewee V-9 gives his opinion of what the display of the Japanese period means to him:

I am very interested in the objects and models about the Japanese colonial period. For example, many old things like phonograph records and radios I could still see in many other places; the street and houses also could be seen and touched in my ordinary life. There are so many historic houses and historic sites in Taiwan. Owing to the preservation of the Japanese architecture and the nostalgic cultural atmosphere in contemporary Taiwan, I still feel familiar with the Japanese past even though I have never lived in that period.<sup>422</sup>



(Figure 14) The reconstructed streetscape of the Japanese period represents the emergence of Taiwanese modernisation. There are many stores such as a photo studio, dental clinic, coffee shop and a *Kimono* shop. Photo by Shih-Hui Li.

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<sup>421</sup> Chen, 'Museums and the shaping of cultural identities'.

<sup>422</sup> Interview with V-9.



(Figure 15) This is a scene inside a Japanese grocery shop. In *Our Land, Our People*, the NMTH uses a large amount of models and historical scenes rather than written narratives to create a fictitious world in which visitors are empowered to make their own meaning of the Taiwanese past. Photo by Shih-Hui Li.



(Figure 16) Taking a photo before a young family member was recruited to the Japanese army and ready to go to the battlefield during WWII. Photo by Shih-Hui Li.

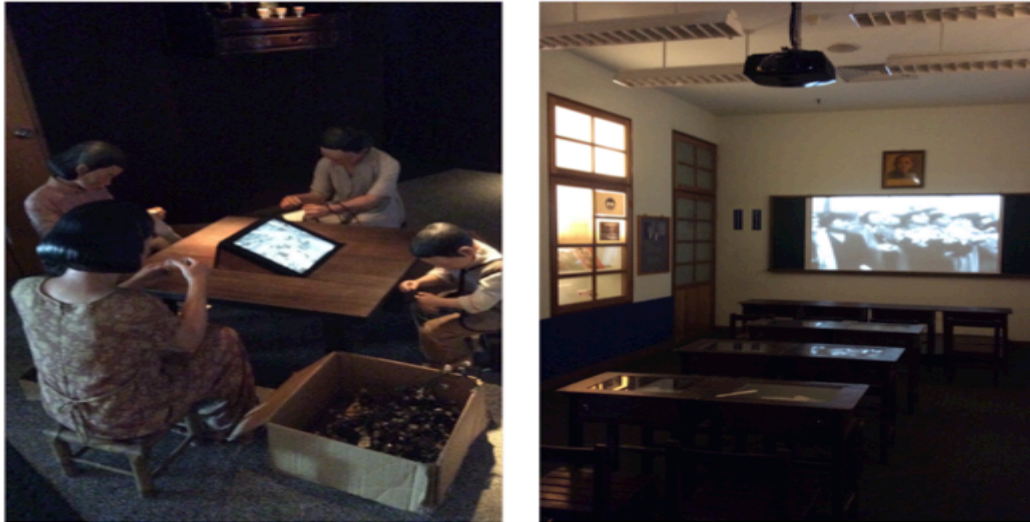
*The representation of post-war Taiwan, especially life experiences in school and at home, provide considerable source materials for visitors to remember and tell their stories*

For those who do not have colonial experiences or family memories, the display of ‘the post-war Taiwan’ instead plays an important role in connecting many interviewees’ childhood memories and verisimilitude models represented in the exhibition. Many interviewees who grew up in the 1970s and 1980s express the deep impression that the theme of the ‘Taiwanese economic miracle’ left upon them, in which historical scenes of Taiwanese family life and additional employment in the 1970s are represented. Interviewee *V-11* shares her childhood memories of helping her mother with her sideline in factory work:

The last part of the exhibition [...] telling the story of the family sideline impresses me most. I remember in my childhood, the government had started to promote the policy of ‘family is the factory’. At that time, my mother often took a lot of sideline jobs such as bringing light bulbs back to home in order to increase the family income. In school, students also used their leisure times to take on additional work in making money for the cost of classes. I remember that because since that time Taiwanese economic condition had improved.<sup>423</sup>

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<sup>423</sup> Interview with *V-11*.



(Figure 17) The photo on the left shows the representation of sideline employment in a family. The photo on the right shows the representation of a 1950s Taiwanese primary school classroom. These scenes have the potential to generate more feelings for visitors who experienced their childhood in the post-war period. Memories and stories could be shared with each member of a family. Photo by Shih-Hui Li.

The representation of the ‘classroom’ also recalls many interviewees’ memories of student life and the ‘national language policy’ at that time. On seeing the model of the classroom and the posters on the wall, interviewee *V-14* remembered that when he studied at primary school, ‘talking in the local language (*Taiyu* 台語) was prohibited because the government regulated every student to talk in Mandarin as the national language. If we talked in *Taiyu*, we would be fined or punished’.<sup>424</sup> He also mentions that the reason he remembered these things was because he had experienced that ‘other parts of the exhibition are too remote to experience, so it could merely compare the remote history with textbooks’.<sup>425</sup>

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<sup>424</sup> Interview with *V-14*.

<sup>425</sup> Interview with *V-14*.

***The Folk life and religious beliefs of the Qing Dynasty are not only part of the past but are also still living experiences within Taiwanese people's daily lives in the present***

Since the Japanese period and post-war Taiwan constitute recent history and are not remote from visitors' experiences of life in the past, the two display units – 'Transformations and the New Order' and 'Towards a Diverse, Democratic Society' – could provide more source materials for the visitors/narrators to apply in constructing their own personal stories. Compared to the Japanese and post-war periods, the Qing Dynasty is remote and nobody alive today has experienced it. However, the representation of Han migrants' ordinary lives and folk religion in 'Territorial Society and Plural Culture' also triggers many interviewees' memories, especially those who can experience religious festivals in their daily life.<sup>426</sup>

Interviewee *V-4* points out that this display unit features 'many historical scenes that we can still see in our period. For example, the fishing industry could combine with the life experiences of my parents and grandparents; the religious ritual of *Wangye's* (王爺) tour of inspection is still an important annual religious activity in our life.'<sup>427</sup> Another two interviewees, *V-10* and *V-15*, also express their emotional reactions to the display of religious festivals and rituals as part of their ordinary lives:

My family is *Bensheng Mingnanren* (本省閩南人); the religious festival is one part of our life experiences. I think that part could combine with my memory. I also would like to invite my father to come to visit and find more his memory.<sup>428</sup>

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<sup>426</sup> The interview data shows that those interviewees who come from the countryside of Tainan City where folk religion is more popular than in other areas express more affection for the reconstruction of the historical scene of the folk religious festival.

<sup>427</sup> Interview with *V-4*.

<sup>428</sup> Interview with *V-10*.

The religious rituals still can be found in our time. The religious activities such as the worship of ancestors, religious festivals in temples are what I am experiencing now.<sup>429</sup>

Chronologically speaking, although the Qing Dynasty is remote from the present, many folk customs are still preserved and can be experienced by contemporary Taiwanese people. Through representing rural life and folk religious festivals via models, the display of Han immigrants in the Qing Dynasty provides a sense of local cultural identity in connecting visitors' daily life experiences with this remote period.

By examining museum visitors' retelling of their memories, it can be argued that visitors will be attracted to 'the everyday objects that they are more likely to recognise from their own lives'.<sup>430</sup> Through narrating their feelings and emotions about certain experiences, visitors will shape their individual identities by connecting their memories with a particular historical period or cultural tradition.

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<sup>429</sup> Interview with V-15.

<sup>430</sup> Christine Johnstone, 'Your granny had one of those! How visitors use museum collections' in *History & Heritage: Consuming the Past in Contemporary Culture*, ed. John Arnold, Kate Davies and Simon Ditchfield (Donhead Publishing Ltd., 1998), 67-78.





(Figure 18) A historical scene represents the Han people's folk religious rituals in the Qing Dynasty. The *Taoism* (道教) ritual has been inherited by contemporary Taiwanese Han people and has become a part of people's ordinary lives. Although the Qing Dynasty is remote, these continuing customs form the link between people's present experiences and historical knowledge. Photo by Shih-Hui Li.

***Contributed by Bentuhua, Taiwanese identity – an identity with the land and life experiences of Taiwan – has become part of mainstream identity for younger Taiwanese generations***

When visitors take the escalator to the entrance of the exhibition, a camera will take each visitor's photo and display it on the screen of 'What are Taiwanese People'. Using this interactive device, the NMTH attempts to transmit the idea of 'Taiwanese ethnic diversity' to the visitors, and meanwhile, presents the nature of Taiwan as an immigrant society. The plural understanding of national identity in contemporary Taiwan is the achievement of *Bentuhua* movements since the 1990s.<sup>431</sup> In

<sup>431</sup> Wang, 'The Content and Contextual Analysis of the Controversy of *Renshi Taiwan* Textbooks'. Hsiao, *Reconstructing Taiwan*.

deconstructing the traditional hegemonic and dominant Chinese identity, contemporary Taiwanese identity with its plural ethnic and cultural identities has provided an oriental mode to aid younger Taiwanese generations ‘in comprehending past actuality in order to grasp present actuality’.<sup>432</sup> For those interviewees who possess a strong consciousness of Taiwanese identity, it is suggested that the definition of Taiwanese people at the NMTH is a familiar idea. However, for those who are still identifying with China and the Chinese past, they will have different thoughts about the Taiwanese past, present and future. The unique generation gap not only exists in people’s historical consciousness, but also in their life orientation which involves ‘articulating human identity with historical knowledge’.<sup>433</sup>

When answering the question of whether they agreed with the definition of ‘Taiwanese people’ in the exhibition, the interview data shows that the older visitors who experienced the transformation of identity from China to Taiwan could offer detailed viewpoints to explain this unique Taiwanese context. As interviewee *V-19* says:

National identity is changing slowly as time goes by. Those who were born after the 1980s when the Martial Law was declared to be ended, especially those who were born after the President Deng-Hui Li, all identify themselves as Taiwanese. You can see those young people who participated in the Sunflower Student Movement<sup>434</sup> (太陽花運動) all identify themselves as Taiwanese. They do not

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<sup>432</sup> Rüsen, ‘Historical consciousness’, 66.

<sup>433</sup> *Ibid.*, 70.

<sup>434</sup> The Sunflower Student Movement was a protest movement driven by a coalition of students and civic groups between March 18 and April 10, 2014. The movement began by occupying the Legislative Yuan and later attempted to occupy the Executive Yuan. Students and civic groups protested the passing of the Cross-Strait Service Trade Agreement (CSSTA). The protesters consider that the passing of the CSSTA violates the democratic procedure without clause-by-clause review. The movement shows not only the young Taiwanese generation’s anxieties when facing the rise of Chinese economic power, but also the general Taiwanese identity of the Taiwanese young



have Chinese life experiences. I do not have Chinese life experiences and even Japanese experiences. My Taiwanese experiences enable me to identify with Taiwan. I would say I am Taiwanese. Although my parents have Japanese experiences, they still consider they are Taiwanese and would not identify with Japan.<sup>435</sup>

Interviewee *V-19* provides answers to explain why the younger Taiwanese generation has a strong sense of identity with Taiwan. The *Bentuhua* movement and their common life experiences in this Island form the driving force to enable the younger Taiwanese generations to have stronger a Taiwanese identity than the elder generations.

***The ‘self-affirming’ Taiwanese identity presented in the NMTH is confirmed by most visitors. The identification with the land and life experiences form the core of visitors’ sense of identity***

As the core concept in responding to the long-term development and transformation of Taiwanese consciousness and Taiwanese identity, the NMTH defines ‘Taiwanese’ as ‘a form of self-affirmation and could not be defined with any particular language or ethnicity’.<sup>436</sup> By doing so, the exhibition not only provides an open public sphere for visitors to discuss the definitions of Taiwanese people, but also creates more spaces for dialogue between different national imaginations.

Generally speaking, the open-ended definition of Taiwanese people presented in the exhibition is in accordance with the contemporary Taiwanese social atmosphere and can provoke visitors’ emotional resonance easily. The interview data shows that most interviewees agree with the inclusive interpretation of Taiwanese people and confirm

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generation.

<sup>435</sup> Interview with *V-19*.

<sup>436</sup> ‘Who are the Taiwanese?’, text panel, *Our Land, Our People*.

that a tolerant attitude is necessary for a diverse society. As interviewees *V-2* and *V-3* said:

Seeing from historical development, Taiwan is an immigrant society; even the indigenous peoples also emigrated from other places. The identity with the land, Taiwan has accumulated for a long time. If all these immigrants could face the land with the emotion of 'living here and growing here', I believe there will be no any problems for the coexistence of different ethnic groups. Since you are born and growing up in this land, no matter where your ancestors come from, you should use the concentration on this land as a starting point to respect other different culture and ethnic groups.<sup>437</sup>

It is my viewpoint that no matter new or old, all people here are Taiwanese people. I am impressed with the panel of 'Who are Taiwanese' and photo in it. In Taiwan, there are debates and confrontations among different identities [...] I think everyone is Taiwanese people because our homes are here and we are all living here.<sup>438</sup>

In *Our Land, Our People*, as Ming-Shan Jiang said, 'the NMTH tries not to talk about Taiwanese identity at the national level but focus on the land and its interactions with the people who are living here'.<sup>439</sup> The interview data shows that Taiwanese people have a Taiwanese identity which combines life experiences with the sense of the land. For both visitors and the museum, it is the common consensus that Taiwan is the home where we live; however, it is still a question for debate as to whether Taiwan is an independent nation-state from China.

However, there are some interviewees who show contrary ideas by criticising the inclusive definition of Taiwanese identity in the exhibition as indefinite, wrong, or

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<sup>437</sup> Interview with *V-2*.

<sup>438</sup> Interview with *V-3*.

<sup>439</sup> Interview with Ming-Shan Jiang.

even useless for visitors to understand the real connotation of Taiwanese identity. For example, interviewee *V-18* pointed out that

The historical narrative presented in the exhibition is too impartial without any political ideologies. The neutral historical narrative could not influence the individual visitor's sense of identity he or she brought to the museum.<sup>440</sup>

In criticising the NMTH's definition of 'Taiwanese people', interviewee *V-5* considered that only those who were born in Taiwan or decided to live here could be identified as Taiwanese. He said:

Although those who came from Vietnam or the Mainland China for marriage are living in Taiwan, I do not know when they will go back to their hometown. I do not think they are Taiwanese and will still call them Vietnamese and Mainland Chinese.<sup>441</sup>

The two interviewees' opinions show their doubt and worries about the multicultural and multi-ethnic understanding of national identity at the NMTH and in contemporary Taiwan society. According to them, the definition of 'Taiwanese people' should be defined explicitly rather than presented in a negotiated or a safe way.

***The interviewees' critiques of the arrangement of each ethnic group's history show the historical narrative of memories in Our Land, Our People cannot adequately represent the diversity of Taiwanese history***

According to the interview data, it is demonstrable that another form of meaning-making exists in criticising whether the exhibition equally represents the

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<sup>440</sup> Interview with *V-18*.

<sup>441</sup> Interview with *V-5*.

historical memories of each ethnic group in Taiwan. These interviewees suggest that the over-emphasis on the Han people's, and especially *Bensheng Mingnanren's* (本省閩南人) stories cannot persuade them to accept the inclusive definition of 'Taiwanese people' in the exhibition. As interviewee *V-21* said:

I found that the focus of the exhibition is Han people come from the Mainland China. The stories of Taiwanese Indigenous Peoples and *Pingpuzu* (平埔族) are comparatively less. If Taiwanese people are the people who live in this land, I think the presentation of the exhibition is a little bit partial.<sup>442</sup>

Like *V-21*, interviewee *V-10* also indicated that the main part of the exhibition centres on presenting Han people's stories. The stories of other Taiwanese ethnic groups such as Aborigines, *Hakka* (客家), *Waisheng* (外省) seem to be integrated into *Mingnan* culture. She said:

Although the exhibition emphasises ethnic diversity, the Indigenous Peoples, Hakka, and Waisheng are presented less. The exhibition does not tell too much about these ethnic groups. I feel the exhibition shows itself to be a little bit partial.<sup>443</sup>

By presenting the voices of museum visitors, in this section I focus on how they respond to the definition of 'Taiwanese people' in the exhibition. On this basis I examine whether the presentation of Taiwan's story in *Our Land, Our People* is in accordance with Taiwanese social needs for multiculturalism and ethnic equality. The interview data show that the majority of interviewees accept the NMTH's definition of Taiwanese people and adopt a plural understanding of national identity when facing a

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<sup>442</sup> Interview with *V-21*.

<sup>443</sup> Interview with *V-10*.

multi-ethnic Taiwanese society. However, the interview data also indicates that the over-emphasis on a given group's history does not fully represent the history of all 'Taiwanese people'.

In asking the interviewees how to improve the content of *Our Land, Our People* in the future, interviewee V-2 observed that the history of the Han people, especially *Mingnanren*, occupies the main part of the exhibition and worried that the museum's historical viewpoint is partial to the service of a particular political ideology:

It is evident that Han migrations that came from the Mainland China four hundred years ago play a major role in the exhibition. The Japanese period occupies a comparatively large portion of this gallery and the post-war Taiwan is less. The exhibition makes me feel that the museum merely selects some specific parts and ignores many other parts of Taiwanese history. Seeing from contemporary Taiwanese social conditions, the exhibition presents itself as a little bit partial. I think we should not talk about Taiwan history with any political standpoints and it will make the presentation of Taiwanese history more comprehensive. If you take any political standpoint to make a historical narrative, you must give preference to some given topics and might distort the impartiality of history.<sup>444</sup>

V-2's opinion reminds us that the purposes of history are not only interpreting the past, but also 'orienting action and forming social and personal identities in the present'.<sup>445</sup> In contemporary multicultural Taiwanese society, individual identity should be respected and impartially presented in the NMTH if the NMTH is to take an open-minded attitude in dealing with the issue of identity.

Another interviewee, V-4, also mentioned the balancing problem of each ethnic group presented in the exhibition. In contrast to V-2, he took a more positive attitude

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<sup>444</sup> Interview with V-2.

<sup>445</sup> Straub, 'Telling stories, making history', 52.

by considering that although some recent stories could be told less in the exhibition, they could be presented more comprehensively and in more detail in special exhibitions. For example, the special exhibition of the Military Dependents' Village presents the stories of *Waishengren*. Moreover, he also indicated that the historical insights using people's rather than rulers' viewpoints presented in the exhibition could allow the NMTH to heal the historical trauma that Taiwanese Indigenous Peoples had suffered when they were ruled by other dominant ethnic groups. As interviewee V-4 pointed out:

If you ask me are there any suggestions for the museum to improve the exhibition, I would answer that the historical memories of each ethnic group should be concerned equally. For example, the Aborigines, especially *Pingpuzu*, although they have been interacted closely with this land, I could not read more stories about them. There are also less stories of the *Waisheng* groups emigrated from the Mainland China to Taiwan since 1949. I think the reason is that the stories of *Waisheng* groups are not remote from our own times [...] I remember that about one or two years ago, the National Museum of Taiwan History conducted a special exhibition about the culture of the Military Dependents' Villages in which the museum tells a lot of stories of *Waisheng* migrations. The inadequacy of the permanent exhibition, in my view, could be supplemented with special exhibitions.<sup>446</sup>

As to the angles of interpreting history, I also noticed that in the exhibition, unlike ordinary Taiwanese history, *Koxinga* (國姓爺), Zheng Chen-Gong (鄭成功) is less mentioned. From the standpoint of the Indigenous Peoples, *Koxinga* and the Han migrations accompanied with him represent the history of Han people's exploitation to the Indigenous peoples. The National Museum of Taiwan History does not give prominence to *Koxinga* [...] I think the museum is attempting to respect different historical interpretation among different ethnic groups.<sup>447</sup>

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<sup>446</sup> Interview with V-4.

<sup>447</sup> Interview with V-4.

In a contemporary immigrant society such as Taiwan, there are various kinds of identities coexisting in one society. In the case of the NMTH, as Wen-Chen Shih told us,

[...] visitors come to see the exhibition and bring with them an individual standpoint to the exhibition; visitors will have different interpretations and different expectations. Each group has their own concerns and hopes their own voices could be presented at the museum. It is insufficient for the permanent exhibition to meet everyone's needs and care about everyone's standpoints.<sup>448</sup>

### ***Conclusion***

Compared to the museum's professional opinions of representing Taiwanese history in *Our Land, Our People*, this chapter draws upon qualitative research in the form of the in-depth interview in order to investigate museum visitors' reading behaviours and their personal meaning-making processes. Presenting visitors' viewpoints, this chapter has provided opportunities for visitors or non-professional storytellers to express their own reconstructed meanings about the exhibition.

Based on the theoretical framework and historical insights of *Our Land, Our People* discussed in the previous two chapters, the purpose of interviewing museum visitors is threefold. Firstly, as the supplement to historical education in schools, the NMTH displays a coherent and chronological Taiwanese history with interactive devices and reconstructed models. Compared to the fragmentary and exam-oriented historical knowledge in schools, the NMTH's coherent story-telling not only satisfies people's needs in learning history, but also presents a fresh new learning experience for those

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<sup>448</sup> Interview with Wen-Chen Shih.

older interviewees who had never learned much about Taiwanese history.

Secondly, according to visitors' 'prior knowledge' about Taiwanese history which they bring to the museum, the interview data shows that interviewees will choose familiar periods or museum objects as source materials to remember the past. Through narrating the past, museum visitors transform their remembering time into historical time, through the narrative function by which 'memory is incorporated into the formation of identity. Memory can be ideologised through the resources of the variations offered by the work of narrative configuration'.<sup>449</sup>

Thirdly, with the development of *Bentuhua* and Taiwanese identity in the past four decades, Taiwanese society has experienced a gradual transformation from the opposition between Chinese and Taiwanese identity into a plural national identity. The new definition of 'Taiwanese people' that the NMTH addresses attempts to use an inclusive approach to reconciling the debate on national identity and ethnic relationships in contemporary Taiwan. Within this context, the research wishes the interview data could present how the museum visitors think the issue of modern Taiwanese identity, and moreover evaluate the effects of the promotion of land identity in the exhibition.

From these three layers, it is suggested that the visitor study of *Our Land, Our People* examined in this chapter deals with the interactions between historical consciousness, memory and identity within the framework of narrative-making. In this triangular relationship, memory plays a key role in connecting historical consciousness with a sense of identity. Although memory or the process of remembering could be

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<sup>449</sup> Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting* (London: The University of Chicago Press, 2004), 84-85.



perceived as a personal psychological behaviour, many theories remind us that the formation of personal memory and past-narrating is confined within a particular social context and can form part of a social, collective memory.<sup>450</sup> It is in this sense that the unique Taiwanese context of changing national identity forms different social collective memories for different generations. This research suggests that the changing of the connotations of Taiwanese collective memories will affect museum visitors' ways of remembering and individual definitions of Taiwan and Taiwanese people.

According to the interview data, many interviewees criticise *Our Land, Our People* for its over-emphasis on the stories of *Bensheng Mingnanren* and comparative lack of stories about other ethnic groups. Moreover, limited to the small proportion of post-war Taiwanese history in the exhibition, many contemporary issues or events such as the 228 Incident are presented concisely and do not satisfy visitors' expectations. Using the permanent exhibition as the main storyline, the NMTH conducts special exhibitions related to contemporary Taiwanese social issues in dealing with more diverse viewpoints and representing other marginalised historical stories of minority groups.

In the next chapter, I change the research focus from the permanent exhibition to special exhibitions in order to explore alternative ways of displaying Taiwanese history. Two special exhibitions will be discussed in presenting how the NMTH displays contemporary Taiwanese society using more open and democratic approaches. *Seeing Pingpu: The History and Culture of the Plains Indigenous Peoples in Taiwan* tells the story of the rediscovery and recovery of the historical memories of Taiwan's *Pingpuzu*,

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<sup>450</sup> Halbwachs, 'The reconstruction of the past'. Michael Stanford, *The Nature of Historical Knowledge* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986). Connerton, *How Societies Remember*.

which empowers people from the tribes to tell their own stories in presenting perspectives beyond official Han-centred historical narratives. *Movement of People: The Migration Stories in Taiwan* discusses the newly-emerged social issues of a 'diverse immigrant society' and 'new immigrants' from South-East Asia, which presents the plurality of Taiwanese society and provides a chance for the public to understand the 'moving experiences' of immigrants, and learn to tolerate and respect different cultures.

In contrast to the permanent exhibition, most special exhibitions at the NMTH have been curated after the opening of the museum. In deciding what topics should be displayed, the special exhibitions reflect the social concerns of the NMTH and could be regarded as an appropriate means of understanding the contemporary public roles of the NMTH. Opening in a mature multicultural Taiwanese society, the NMTH is facing various challenges from different social groups. In responding to contemporary Taiwan's particular situation, the NMTH pays more attention to representing diverse viewpoints from target communities in the special exhibitions than in the permanent exhibition. Through building close relationship with communities, the NMTH attempts to give more power to the people to construct history from 'our' viewpoints rather than from 'other's' viewpoints.

## Chapter 5

### **Voices from Contemporary Taiwanese Society: The Social Concerns of the National Museum of Taiwan History**

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#### *Special exhibitions and contemporary Taiwanese society*

In the previous two chapters, this research drew upon the permanent exhibition *Our Land, Our People: The Story of Taiwan* as the main case study to investigate how the NMTH as a pioneering institution that has constructed a new interpretation system for displaying Taiwan in museums. By combining the intellectual context of Taiwanese historical research with the display strategies presented in the exhibition, Chapter 3 mainly focused on presenting the museum's 'back-stage' professional work of knowledge-shaping, theme-selecting, script-making, exhibition-designing and space-deployment. In Chapter 4, this thesis explored and evaluated not only whether the exhibition's components and narratives effectively provide visitors with an 'ideal textual environment', but also to investigate the triple connections among personal nostalgic emotions, individual historical consciousness and the external social contexts.<sup>451</sup>

The findings from the two previous chapters not only show how the NMTH shapes the new definitions of Taiwanese history and Taiwanese identity, but also highlight the inadequacies and partiality of the permanent exhibition. Firstly, the entire Taiwanese story displayed in the permanent exhibition is still a Han-centred narrative in which the stories and historical culture of other ethnic groups are sparsely represented. Secondly,

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<sup>451</sup> Chang, *The Narrative Turn of Contemporary Museum Exhibition*. Rüsen, 'Historical consciousness'.

although the NMTH has attempted to represent Taiwanese history from the diverse historical viewpoints of ordinary people, the power of history-making is still dominated by the museum-historian and is shared less with the public. In the historical narrative of the permanent exhibition, the information provided remains traditional in nature, and lacks a flow of information between the institution and its users. Both museum curators and museum visitors agree that the inadequacies of the permanent exhibition should be supplemented by special exhibitions.<sup>452</sup>

In this context, this chapter proposes to go a step further to investigate special exhibitions – the alternative interpretation system of the NMTH – in order to explore how issue-based special exhibitions can provide an historical understanding of marginalised and debated social issues within contemporary Taiwanese society for the general public. In addition, through examining the progress of the selection of issues and the construction of the script of these special exhibitions, this chapter also proposes to investigate the public role of the NMTH in using the museum as the public forum in which diverse viewpoints from communities can work together with the viewpoints from the museum and its curators to form indispensable components in constructing exhibition narratives. Since opening to the public, the NMTH has conducted many issue-based special exhibitions that are closely related to people's present living experiences and Taiwanese social phenomena. In such exhibitions, the gap between the past and the present can be more easily bridged in order to help visitors to develop a more sympathetic understanding of the past and the present of their society.<sup>453</sup>

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<sup>452</sup> Interview with Wen-Chen Shih. Interview with Ming-Shan Jiang. Interviews with V-3 and V-4.

<sup>453</sup> Wen-Chen Shih, 'The history museum that is living in the present', in *The Guide Book of the*

For example, in dealing with contemporary issues of migration and ethnic diversity, the exhibition *From House to Home: Exhibition of Military-dependents' Village in Taiwan* (落地成家：臺灣眷村特展), represents the life memories and moving experiences of *Waishengren*, which links with the ongoing project of dismantling the Military-dependents' Villages.<sup>454</sup> In connecting people's personal memories with a social collective memory, the exhibition *Comeback Victory: Baseball in Taiwan* (逆轉勝：臺灣棒球特展) selects baseball – the most popular sports game in Taiwan – to connect visitors' memories of watching baseball games and sharing the happiness of victory with the wider history of Taiwan's baseball.<sup>455</sup> The exhibition *Island, Quake, Rebirth: 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Exhibition of 921 Earthquake* (島嶼地動：921 地震十五週年特展) represents the traumatic memories of the 921 Earthquake through survivors' personal stories and goes a step further to discuss the process of how Taiwanese society has overcome the trauma and reflects on the relationship between the people and the land.<sup>456</sup>

Compared to the general history of Taiwan which is negotiated through the lens of political forces and the perspectives of academic circles in the permanent exhibition, when facing the rise of heterogeneous social groups and challenging viewpoints since the museum's opening to the public, the special exhibitions of the NMTH have been used as new public forums in which the issue of displaying polyvocality in museums

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*Movement of People: The Migration Stories in Taiwan* (Tainan, Taiwan: National Museum of Taiwan History, 2014), 5.

<sup>454</sup> National Museum of Taiwan History, *The Guide Book of From House to Home: Exhibition of Military-dependents' Village in Taiwan* (Tainan: National Museum of Taiwan History, 2013).

<sup>455</sup> National Museum of Taiwan History, *The Guide Book of Comeback Victory: Baseball in Taiwan* (Tainan: National Museum of Taiwan History, 2014).

<sup>456</sup> National Museum of Taiwan History, *The Guide Book of Island, Quake, Rebirth: 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of 921 Earthquake* (Tainan: National Museum of Taiwan History, 2014).

could be addressed.<sup>457</sup> The purposes of the NMTH's special exhibitions, as Ming-Shan Jiang states, 'are to present curators' viewpoints of talking about some particular issues that have strong consciousness of social concerns and meanwhile provide more opportunities for the participants from the target communities to speak for themselves'.<sup>458</sup> In this sense, the special exhibitions are issue-guided in which not only can the curators play more active roles in selecting exhibition themes, but also the viewpoints from society can be heard. Empowering ordinary people to share their own memories and life experiences with museum curators creates a narrative structure in which personal story-telling can be represented in a larger context and transformed into a part of social collective memories. The interactions between personal life history and historical context generate the transfer of the power of writing history from the museum – a professional history-maker – to ordinary people, thus weakening the museum's authority in interpreting history.

In this chapter, two special exhibitions are examined in order to respond to two important questions: (1), how the NMTH offers platforms for marginalised or minority groups to self-voice in the public sphere of the museum, and (2), how the NMTH creates forums for debate in which the Taiwanese public can understand and rethink the issues of social inclusion and social justice. The first case is the exhibition *Seeing Pingpu: The History and Culture of the Plains Indigenous Peoples in Taiwan* (看見平埔：臺灣平埔族歷史與文化特展). Focusing on representing the traditionally marginalised history of Taiwan's Plains Indigenous Peoples (*Pingpu*, *Pingpuzu* or

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<sup>457</sup> Clifford, *Routes, Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*. Rhiannon Mason, Christopher Whitehead and Helen Graham, 'One voice to many voices? Displaying polyvocality in an art gallery', in *Museums and Communities*, ed. Viv Golding (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 163-177.

<sup>458</sup> Interview with Ming-Shan Jiang.

*Pingpu* Indigenous Peoples), this exhibition could, to a certain extent, be viewed as the supplement and extension to the issue of ethnic interactions explored in the permanent exhibition. As discussed in Chapter 3, the rediscovery of the historical culture of Taiwan's *Pingpu* Indigenous Peoples has always been an important historical issue in representing Taiwanese uniqueness and constructing Taiwanese subjectivity.<sup>459</sup> Since the museum's preparatory phase, the collection of the life objects and oral data of *Pingpu* tribes in Southern Taiwan, especially those of the *Siraya* (西拉雅) tribe, has constituted the major work of the NMTH, which enabled the museum to establish a research centre for studying Taiwanese ethnic interactions.<sup>460</sup> As an important part of presenting Taiwanese ethnic diversity, displaying Taiwan's Plains Indigenous Peoples had been decided upon as an imperative part of the museum's politics of display.<sup>461</sup>

In contrast to the discussion in Chapter 3, this chapter proposes to link the exhibition *Seeing Pingpu* to contemporary Taiwan's Aboriginal Movements of Name-Rectification, Revitalisation and Identity-Rebuilding since the 1980s. In this Taiwanese context, this chapter proposes to show that *Seeing Pingpu* not only presents a historical journey of how *Pingpuzu* had been marginalised within the framework of dominant master narratives and even disappeared on the historical stage, but also raises the much-debated and unresolved problems posed by the search for *Pingpuzu*'s ethnic identity and the restoration of withdrawn rights.

Extending the historical narrative presented in the permanent exhibition that Taiwan is an immigrant society, *Movement of People: The Migration Stories in Taiwan* (來自

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<sup>459</sup> Chan, 'The Interpretation of Modern Pingpu Phenomenon'. Hsiao, *Reconstructing Taiwan*, 315-320.

<sup>460</sup> National Museum of Taiwan History, *Glorifying Taiwan*, 51.

<sup>461</sup> Interview with Mi-Cha Wu.

四方：近代台灣移民的故事特展) goes a step further to discuss the concept of the ‘identity changing’ of immigrants and how the issues of immigrants provide multicultural and inclusive ways of thinking for contemporary Taiwan to realise social inclusion and cultural equality. As an important achievement of the NMTH’s cultural equality policy of ‘developing diverse interpretations – empowering every ethnic and social group with the opportunities to self-voice and enabling visitors to see and hear diverse voices’,<sup>462</sup> the construction of *Movement of People* and related educational works are significant for the NMTH in encouraging the Taiwanese public to pay more attention to the social conditions and predicament of Taiwan’s various groups of immigrants.<sup>463</sup>

In *Movement of People*, the stories from four groups of immigrants were displayed which attempted to build a ‘past-present linkage’<sup>464</sup> to enable visitors to empathize with the plural culture that different immigrants brought to Taiwan. Through combining these stories with a greater amount of historical context, it is suggested that the NMTH attempted to convey a key idea in *Movement of People*; namely that migration stories are requisite components for telling Taiwanese history. In the introductory section, the main aim of the exhibition was clearly presented:

This section illustrates the diverse ethnic groups and multi-cultural society in Taiwan recently, based on the migration experiences and stories of different individuals, families and groups who have travelled around the world to immigrate to the island of Taiwan. These include foreign missionaries, *Dachen* people, new female immigrants, and indigenes who have migrated to the city. Through their

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<sup>462</sup> National Museum of Taiwan History, *The Annual Report of the National Museum of Taiwan History 2014* (Tainan: National Museum of Taiwan History, 2015), 17.

<sup>463</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>464</sup> Merriman, *Beyond the Glass Case*, 19.



life experiences of migrating, wandering and settling down, demonstrated by the immigrant's stories, we wish to describe and present the history and society of recent Taiwan. This presents a more diverse and broader perspective, which also enriches our understanding, respect and tolerance toward different experiences of 'immigration' and 'migration' in Taiwan.<sup>465</sup>

In the first display unit, 'In the Name of the Lord: Foreign Missionaries in Taiwan', the stories of missionary workers in Taiwan since the seventeenth century are displayed. Foreign missionaries 'visited the most rural and poor areas and devoted their young lives to living in a foreign place. For many of the Western missionaries, they considered Taiwan as their home'.<sup>466</sup>

The second display unit, '*Dachen* Crossing Taiwan: The story of *Dachen* People', presents the migration story of the *Dachen* People (大陳人) who withdrew from the *Dachen* islands off the coast of Zhejiang province with the government of the Republic of China in 1955. The people who withdrew from the *Dachen* islands and migrated to Taiwan have been settled by the Taiwan government in 35 *Dachen* villages located in 12 cities and counties throughout Taiwan. The exhibition selects stories taking place in the *Dachen* community in Qijin (旗津), Kaohsiung City, as epitomes for presenting the *Dachen* people's experiences of movement and their settling down in Taiwan. Through displaying old photos, *Dachen* people's unique life objects, personal life stories and film recordings, visitors are invited to experience the movement process of the *Dachen* People in 1955.

The third part of the exhibition, 'Leaving Home and Fulfilling Dreams: The

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<sup>465</sup> 'The Story of Immigration', text panel, *Movement of People*.

<sup>466</sup> 'The Footprint of the Others', text panel, *Movement of People*.

Migration of Indigenous People to the City', discusses the issue of Aboriginal inner migration within Taiwan island from rural areas to the cities. This group of indigenous peoples are 'cross-tribe and cross group indigenes' and are generally termed as 'city indigenes'. These indigenous people who migrated to the cities usually 'worked at low-wage, long-hour and dangerous labour jobs. Many indigenes resided and gathered in the border areas of the city, forming their own tribes'.<sup>467</sup> In this section, the exhibition selects the *Kuabar* tribe (古華部落) of the *Paiwan* (排灣族) living in the cities<sup>468</sup> as a case study to present the migration stories and the life struggles of indigenes in the cities. Through oral interviews and the display of the life objects of the tribes' people, the exhibition attempts to present the life course and experiences of indigenes who left their original tribes to live in the cities.

Of the four migration groups, the 'new female immigrants' or 'Foreign Brides' who emigrated to Taiwan for the purpose of cross-country marriage have expanded the boundaries of Taiwanese citizens both mentally and geographically and have become a newly-emerged social concern for Taiwan's museums during the past decade. Investigating the exhibition in the context of the current practice of 'displaying new female immigrants in Taiwan's museums', this chapter examines the current situation as well as the problems of constructing exhibitions about new female immigrants in Taiwan's museums. By scrutinising the issues raised by the new female immigrants – their roles in the public sphere of Taiwanese society and how museums deal with

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<sup>467</sup> 'Drifting to the City', text panel, *Movement of People*.

<sup>468</sup> 'Teenagers from the *Kuabar* tribe of the *Paiwan* in Chunrih township, Pingtung have continued to arrive and reside in Yongkang, Tainan since the 1980s. At the time, the tribe's teenagers mainly came to Yongkang to work for the Dachan Company. They first started working at manual labor jobs such as movers, and later were promoted to an escort, who assisted the driver delivering goods. More and more *Kuabar* people were drawn to Yongkang for a stable income. They resided in the same community and developed a 'little *Kuabar*' tribe in the city'. ( '*Kuabar* tribe of the *Paiwan* Living in the Cities', text panel, *Movement of People*).

social discrimination generated by the contemporary migration phenomenon – a clear and comprehensive Taiwanese context is provided.

***Constructed by ‘Others’: The marginalised history and ethnic revitalisation of Taiwan Plains Indigenous Peoples***

Due to their long-term interactions with different foreign powers, especially Chinese Han immigrants, the Plains Aborigines (*Pingpuzu*) were gradually assimilated into the dominant Han culture and tribes lost their individual ethnic identities. In the first population census conducted by the government of the governor-general of Taiwan in 1905, the Japanese colonial government inherited the ethnic classification of the Qing dynasty by classifying *Pingpuzu* as ‘Cooked Barbarians’ (熟番), which signifies the Plains Indigenous Peoples who had been assimilated into Chinese Han culture.<sup>469</sup> Under the racial classification of Japan, the ‘Cooked Barbarians’ were classified as the ‘people of the island’ (本島人), or ‘Taiwanese’, who were included in the same classification as Chinese Han people (*Hoklo* and *Hakka*), while the aborigines who resided in mountain areas were classified as another racial group: *Kaosazu* (Mountain Aborigines 高砂族).<sup>470</sup> The identification of the Japanese colonial government’s household system and racial classification show that, at least in the Japanese period, the Plains Aborigines had been integrated into the ethnic group of Taiwan’s Han people.

In 1956, the Taiwan Provincial Government conducted the first population census of

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<sup>469</sup> Su-Chuan Chan, ‘Identification and Transformation of Plains Aborigines, 1895-1960: Based on the racial classification of household system and census’, *Taiwan Historical Research* 12 (2) (2005), 121-166.

<sup>470</sup> Wakabayashi, *The Taiwanisation of the Republic of China*, 46.

the post-war period. In the statistical data of this census, there were 27,009 people who did not belong to the ethnic groups of *Waishengren*, *Benshengren* or *Sanbao* (Mountains Aborigines, 山胞), and who were registered as ‘unknown-ethnicity’. Most of these people of ‘unknown-ethnicity’ are considered by researchers to be Plains Aborigines.<sup>471</sup> Although the Taiwan Provincial Government recognised Plains Aborigines who had been registered as ‘Cooked Barbarians’ in the Japanese household system as ‘plains *Sanbao*’ (the Mountain Aborigines who resided in plains areas 平地山胞), many *Pingpuzu* tribes had not been recognised, and could not be registered as *Sanbao*. From the ethnic classification of post-war Taiwan, it is suggested that Plains Aborigines had been included within the classification of Mountain Aborigines and lost their ethnic status again. The policy of registering Plains Aborigines and Mountain Aborigines as the same ethnic group is the main reason that most *Pingpu* tribes had seemed to disappear and become part of ‘history’. For example, the *Kavalan* tribes had been registered within the racial group of *A-mei*, and have been marginalised and forgotten for nearly 40 years.<sup>472</sup> Furthermore, due to social discrimination under the Kuomintang’s Chinese Han nationalism, some other *Pingpu* tribes had chosen to give up their ethnic identity and identified themselves as Han people.<sup>473</sup>

Their assimilation into Mountain Aborigines and Han people allowed *Pingpuzu* to disappear on the historical stage for a long time and caused great difficulties for

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<sup>471</sup> Chan, ‘Identification and Transformation of Plains Aborigines, 1895-1960’. Hon-Kung Tuan, ‘Call me Siraya, I am an aborigine: From Revitalisation, identity to renamed’, in *Ethnic History, Culture and Identity: Taiwan’s Plains Indigenous Peoples* (Tainan: National Museum of Taiwan History, 2013). National Museum of Taiwan History, *Seeing Pingpu: The History and Culture of the Plains Indigenous Peoples in Taiwan* (Tainan: National Museum of Taiwan History, 2013c), 200.

<sup>472</sup> Kuo-Bing Hsieh, ‘The identities of Plains Indigenous Peoples and historical justice’, in *Ethnic History, Culture and Identity: Taiwan’s Plains Indigenous Peoples* (Tainan: National Museum of Taiwan History, 2013c), 10.

<sup>473</sup> Chan, ‘Identification and Transformation of Plains Aborigines’.

*Pingpu* tribes in rebuilding their individual ethnic identities. In contemporary Taiwan, the ethnic revitalisation movements of *Pingpu* tribes face challenges from the tribes within and the government externally. On the one hand, it is necessary for *Pingpuzu* to recognise their *Pingpu* origins and identify themselves as *Pingpuzu* for posterity; on the other hand, another important aim for the progressing movement of ethnic revitalisation is to strive for national recognition with the status of ‘Indigenous Peoples’.<sup>474</sup> However, even in today’s society, only *Sao* and *Kavalan* are officially recognised as Plains Indigenous People by the government, while other revitalised *Pingpu* tribes such as *Siraya* are still striving for national recognition.

As an important part of Taiwan’s aboriginal revitalisation movements since the 1980s, the issue of Taiwan’s Plains Indigenous Peoples could also be examined in the Taiwanese context of *Bentuhua*, democratisation and multiculturalism after the lifting of Martial Law in 1987. Viewed in the light of this particular Taiwanese social development, the recovery of *Pingpuzu*’s ethnic status and ethnic rights as ‘Indigenous Peoples’ has been viewed as an important part of transitional justice in the post-authoritarian period. For the revitalised *Pingpu* tribes, striving for national recognition of the status of ‘Indigenous People’ is the key to recovering their rights as the ‘First Nations’ of Taiwan.<sup>475</sup> For the advocates of *Pingpu*’s name-rectification and revitalisation movements, searching for *Pingpu*’s ethnic identity and asking the government to recognise *Pingpuzu*’s ethnic rights could be regarded as important for their restoration and as reparation for the historical injustices rooted in the oppression

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<sup>474</sup> Hsieh, ‘The identities of Plains Indigenous Peoples and historical justice’, 3.

<sup>475</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

and dominance of the institutions of modern states.<sup>476</sup>

In 1994, in response to aboriginal Name-Rectification Movements, the term *Sanbao* was officially amended to ‘Indigenous Peoples’ in the Constitution of the Republic of China, which signifies that the status of Taiwan’s aborigines as the ‘First Nations’ had been confirmed.<sup>477</sup> In this context, for today’s democratic and multicultural Taiwanese society, the ethnic revitalisation and name-rectification movements of *Pingpuzu* present multiple contemporary meanings. Firstly, the awakening of *Pingpuzu* and the rediscovery of *Pingpuzu*’s ethnic culture show that the traditional Chinese Han-centred national integration has been deconstructed still further. Secondly, the rediscovery of *Pingpuzu*’s history embodies the new spirit of Taiwanese history in representing marginalised history and providing diverse historical viewpoints. By empowering Plains Aborigines to tell their own history, the new *Pingpu* history will no longer be the subordinate of dominant master narratives. Thirdly, in the post-authoritarian period, comparable to the rediscovery of the historical truths of the 228 Incident and the White Terror, the issue of *Pingpuzu* has also been constructed as a powerful ethnic discourse in challenging the Kuomintang’s authoritarian rule and striving for the realisation of social justice in Taiwan’s democratic constitutional institution. Lastly, the revitalisation of *Pingpuzu* expands the ethnic boundaries and the connotations of the Taiwanese people, and has made a major contribution to the shaping of Taiwan’s plural national identity.

Considering the three contemporary social meanings of *Pingpu* tribes’ ethnic revitalisation, it is pivotal for this chapter to discuss how the NMTH responds and

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<sup>476</sup> *Ibid.*, 6-7.

<sup>477</sup> Wakabayashi, *The Taiwanisation of the Republic of China*, 399.

interprets this social (or ethnic) issue within the context of transitional Taiwanese society. For the NMTH, representing *Pingpu* tribes' historical culture demonstrates that for a new Taiwanese history museum, the singular master historical narrative will continue to be challenged by the rediscovery of marginalised voices. Meanwhile, the public functions of the NMTH should be adjusted slightly from focusing on the practices of object display and knowledge provision to sharing more of its authority in writing history with the people from the communities it represents. In talking about the contemporary meanings of *Seeing Pingpu*, the curator of the exhibition Wan-Lin Tzeng (曾婉琳) notes that:

In dealing with contemporary issues, museums have to face the challenges from contemporary social structures. Taking *Pingpu* as an example, although the *Pingpu*'s identity has been still ambiguous in the political area, their ethnic cultures has been identified and lively presented within the areas of academic discussion. Through academic research and the awakening of *Pingpu*'s self-consciousness, the positive role of *Pingpu* tribes in representing their own historical culture could be possible in the exhibition.<sup>478</sup>

Tzeng's opinion presents the current difficulties for *Pingpu* tribes in recovering their ethnic identity and historical tradition. The first predicament that contemporary *Pingpu* tribes face is that they have lost subjectivity in writing their own history. When facing the challenges from various foreign dominant powers, *Pingpu* tribes have been marginalised and written into 'others' history. By re-coding and recombining all the Plains Aboriginal tribes into one integrated ethnic group of *Pingpuzu*, the abundant and

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<sup>478</sup> Wan-Lin Tzeng, 'The contemporary meanings of the exhibition of *Pingpu*', *The Collection of Papers of the Conference of Museums and Taiwan History, 2014* (Tainan: National Museum of Taiwan History, 2014), (X), 2.

diverse culture of each *Pingpu* tribe has been ignored. In this sense, the others' imaginations of *Pingpuzu* has become another kind of master narrative in which specific tribes' cultures are still marginalised as they are constructed by the 'others' gaze and are lacking the active characteristic to participate in telling history'.<sup>479</sup>

### ***We are always here: The representation of the Pingpu tribes' viewpoints***

In the first section of *Seeing Pingpu*, the display theme of *Making Pingpu* is designed to explore how *Pingpu* tribes have been marginalised and assimilated into other, advantaged ethnic cultures. The purposes of this section are not only to guide the visitors in rethinking *Pingpu*, in that 'our knowledge about *Pingpu*'s history mainly comes from the making *Pingpu* process of foreign governors in which the voices of *Pingpu* indigenous peoples are invisible',<sup>480</sup> but also to express the main concern of the exhibition that the best way to understand the real situations of *Pingpu* is to empower the tribes to speak for themselves. As the text panel of *Seeing Pingpu* relates:

Since the 16<sup>th</sup> century, *Pingpu* indigenous peoples had begun to [make] contact with other peoples and [have] gradually been written into 'History'. The term '*Pingpu*' was firstly used in [the] Qing Dynasty, which signifies the indigenous peoples living in the plain areas. In [the] Japanese period, [the] Japanese government classified Taiwanese mountain indigenous peoples into nine ethnic groups and saw *Pingpu* as a homogeneous independent ethnic group in which existed 10 sub ethnic groups. Present classification of *Pingpu* ethnic groups is based on the classification of the Japanese period. In the late 1980s, *Pingpu* indigenous peoples had begun to dedicate [themselves] to Cultural Revitalisation and [the] Name-Correcting Movement. With the propagation of mass media,

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<sup>479</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>480</sup> Wen-Chen Shih, 'The introduction of the exhibition of Seeing Pingpu' in *The Guide Book of Seeing Pingpu: The History and Culture of the Plains Indigenous Peoples in Taiwan* (Tainan: National Museum of Taiwan History, 2013), 92.



*Pingpu* has [...] gradually become an understandable term in Taiwan [ese] society. *Pingpu* has been misunderstood as a generalised term that signifies one ethnic group.<sup>481</sup>

The principal historical view presented in this section shows how ethnic interaction since the sixteenth century has assimilated *Pingpu* Indigenous Peoples into different dominant culture and lost their own ethnic identity through re-coding *Pingpu* under aboriginal policies of different states. In the beginning part of *Seeing Pingpu*, representing *Pingpu* from ‘other’s’ viewpoints not only shows the history of Taiwanese ethnic interactions but also tells the visitors the development and changing of the indigenous policies in Taiwan history. The main aim of the first section ‘*Pingpu* Indigenous Peoples in History’ is attempting to tell a history of Taiwanese ethnic interactions in which the ethnic demarcation among *Pingpu* indigenous peoples and other ethnic groups had been blurred. In this context, *Pingpu* groups have gradually lost their ethnic identity and been presented in historical documents as merely ‘others’ gaze and lacking the active characteristic to participate in telling history’.<sup>482</sup>

In empowering *Pingpu* tribes to write their own history, in the second part of the exhibition, two display strategies are applied in not only offering visitors a new, self-voicing historical angle from the tribes, but also inviting visitors to understand and rethink the issues of ethnic equality and social inclusion among various groups in a multicultural society. Analysing the politics of display, it is suggested that the principal display strategy is to represent *Pingpu* culture by discovering ‘the process of cultural

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<sup>481</sup> ‘Who is Pingpu? Where is Pingpu?’, text panel, *Seeing Pingpu: The History and Culture of the Plains Indigenous Peoples in Taiwan*.

<sup>482</sup> Tzeng, ‘The contemporary meanings of the exhibition of *Pingpu*’, (X) 6.

transformation and integration behind materials',<sup>483</sup> and, most importantly, the links between objects and Taiwanese social issues. All the objects collected from the tribes and selected by the curatorial team can be classified into three categories which bear contemporary social meanings to help enhance the public understanding of the ethnic revitalisation of Taiwanese *Pingpu* indigenous peoples. As curator Wan-Lin Tzeng notes:

The first part of objects are those still being used by tribes which can be arranged and displayed in presenting today's life and culture of *Pingpu* tribes. The second part of objects is the contemporary reproductions of cultural revitalisation which are used to link the ordinary lives of *Pingpu*'s tribes with their remote past. The invented tradition provides material evidences for ethnic cultural revitalisation. The last part of the objects is advertisements, official documents, and photos which tell the stories of contemporary Name-Rectification Movement.<sup>484</sup>

From the classification of exhibition objects above, it is suggested that the images of *Pingpu* Indigenous Peoples represented in *Seeing Pingpu* focus more on the revitalised *Pingpu* tribes than on those marginalised and disappeared tribes of the past. Centring on presenting objects which illustrate cultural revitalisation, current life, revitalised customs or the festivals of today's *Pingpu* tribes, the exhibition achieves the objectives of the NMTH's special exhibitions in not only building the 'past-present linkage' between history and contemporary social issues, but also reminding the public to pay more attention to the preservation of ethnic culture and *Pingpu*'s efforts in striving for their rights and status as the first people of Taiwan.

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<sup>483</sup> *Ibid.*, 128.

<sup>484</sup> Tzeng, 'The contemporary meanings of the exhibition of *Pingpu*', (X) 10.

In addition to discovering the contemporary meanings behind these objects, the exhibition also selects five *Pingpu* stories in showing that ‘when facing to the foreign influences and the social changes, how did *Pingpu*’s tribes develop the best way of surviving and search for self-identity in a changing society’.<sup>485</sup>

In the first story, ‘A *Pingpu*’s Big Family in the Qing Dynasty: Pan Family of the *An-Li* Tribe’ (清代平埔大家族：岸裡社潘家), the exhibition narrates the progress of how the Pan family of the *An-Li* tribe of *Pazzehe* (巴宰)<sup>486</sup> had been assimilated into the national institution of the Qing Dynasty and became the most powerful family and landlord in *An-Li* tribe.<sup>487</sup> The second display unit addresses the changing of the *Pingpu* tribe’s religious beliefs when facing the dominant Christian culture. Focusing on the Japanese colonial period, this unit introduces the personal story of Mai-Kuai (買快, 1878-1962), the first *Siraya* female disciple of the *Bama* Presbyterian Church (拔馬教會) in Zuozhen (左鎮), Tainan. Today, the *Bama* Church is still the centre of faith for *Siraya*. In the exhibition, *Mai-Kuai*’s story could be perceived as the epitome of many Christian *Pingpu* families in the late nineteenth century, and shows how *Pingpu* tribes faced the challenges of foreign culture.<sup>488</sup> The first two *Pingpu* stories mainly focus on the issue of how *Pingpu* tribes had been incorporated into other, more dominant cultures and how individual tribes’ ethnic identities were gradually lost. In contrast to the two stories that deal with the marginalisation of the *Pingpu* tribes’ ethnic culture, in the second part, the exhibition changes the story-telling angle to concentrate more on contemporary *Pingpu* tribes’ struggle for Ethnic Revitalisation and Name-Rectification.

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<sup>485</sup> Shih, ‘The introduction of the exhibition of Seeing Pingpu’, 152.

<sup>486</sup> A *Pingpu* ethnic group residing in the plains areas of Central Taiwan.

<sup>487</sup> Shih, ‘The introduction of the exhibition of Seeing Pingpu’, 153.

<sup>488</sup> *Ibid.*, 160.

By displaying the objects and stories from the tribes which were not reinterpreted by the museum, visitors could listen to more voices from the tribes rather than absorb the information provided by the curators.

Ren-Gi Li (李仁記, 1919-2001), as the Priestess of the *Gibeshua* (吉貝婁) tribe for the past 40 years, is the most important figure in combining and maintaining religious belief in the *Gibeshua* tribe. In the *Gibeshua* tribe, Li acts as a religious and spiritual leader who takes charge of the Night Festival (夜祭) of the tribe and heals sick people. In this display unit, the exhibition creates an interactive visitor environment which combines photos, films, interview recordings, news reports and religious objects to invite visitors to experience Li's life and the culture of the Night Festival. The *Gibeshua* tribe's Night Festival is the most significant symbol of the *Pingpu* ethnic revitalisation movement. The selection of Ren-Gi Li's personal story is used to inform the public that 'although the *Siraya*'s culture has been challenged by advantageous Han culture, the traditional religious culture has been existing and continuing'.<sup>489</sup>

Another two personal stories of Yao-Chang Pan (潘耀璋) from the Pan Family of the *Sandiao* (三貂) Tribe and Wan-Lai Jei (偕萬來, 1932-2008) of the *Kavalan* tribe, focus on the progress in searching for ethnic identity and striving for the name-rectification of the two marginalised ethnic groups of *Ketaganan* (凱達格蘭) and *Kavalan*.<sup>490</sup> In Pan's story, the exhibition focuses on how Pan strived for the official recognition of the *Ketaganan* as an independent ethnic group from the government. In this display unit, Pan's manuscript 'The Historical Development and the Ways of Life of *Ketaganan*' was displayed as the most important document in showing Pan's efforts in

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<sup>489</sup> *Ibid.*, 168.

<sup>490</sup> *Ibid.*, 174, 180.

rediscovering and defining the *Ketagalan*'s unique ethnic culture. Like Pan's story and its link with the history of the *Ketagalan*'s ethnic revitalisation, the personal story of Wan-Lai Jei reveals the history of the *Kavalan*'s name-rectification. In this display unit, the exhibition focused on how Jei dedicated himself to striving for the recovery and teaching of the traditional language of *Kavalan* which is the pivotal endeavour for realising the ethnic revitalisation of *Kavalan*. The presentation of the progress of the Name-Rectification Movements of the two *Pingpu* tribes presents the history of *Pingpu*'s ethnic revitalisation on the one hand and stimulates the public to reflect upon the problem of ethnic inequality on the other.

By cooperating with the target communities and curatorial partners including the Zuozhen Bama Pingpu Museum, the Zuozhen Presbyterian Church, the Gibeshua Historical Studio, the Cultural Association of Siraya, the Ketagalan Cultural Centre, and the Association of the Development of Kavalan, *Seeing Pingpu* tried to empower the objects provided by the tribes to tell the stories from the tribes' viewpoints to the greatest possible degree rather than reinterpreting or reproducing the meanings of the objects in the museum.

However, in the interview with the curator of *Seeing Pingpu*, Wen-Chen Shih, I enquired about the principles of how curators select which issues and themes can be presented in the exhibition, Shih takes the exhibition *Seeing Pingpu* as an example which illustrates the presentation of the curator's viewpoints on selecting and editing personal stories. As Shih points out,

Firstly, I hope I could look after the diversities among different *Pingpu* ethnic groups rather than focusing on the *Siraya* of Southern Taiwan. Secondly, I also

hope to look after different periods rather than merely talking about the history of *Pingpu* in the Qing Dynasty or Japanese period. Thirdly, I propose not to overemphasise the dominant viewpoints from the upper class of the tribes and ignore the voices from other classes. Furthermore, I also hope to talk about the issues from female angles in weakening the male viewpoints. In conclusion, the historical contexts, class, ethnicity, gender could be viewed as the four basic curating angles that guide me to select stories. [...] By presenting the five *Pingpu* stories, it is expected that visitors could see the differences between this exhibition and the permanent exhibition and go a step further to discuss the issues of the coexistence of diverse cultural identities in a multicultural society.<sup>491</sup>

According to Shih, it is suggested that before deciding which story should be presented in the exhibition, the curator had determined which viewpoints the exhibition needed to emphasise and that the selected stories should be suitable for the establishment of the theoretical framework of the exhibition. Curator Ming-Shan Jiang also mentions similar points in discussing the editing of personal stories within the exhibition narrative in the exhibition *Seeing Pingpu*:

In interviewing with participants, taking the exhibition of *Seeing Pingpu* as an example, we might firstly talk [...] about the policies which enabled *Pingpu* [to] disappear and then to ask them how they deal with these historical events and the movements of Ethnic Revitalisation. Our objective is to let them to talk, although the framework of the story is within our project. [...] When I was interviewing the participants, I would not let them know the framework of story. The special exhibition will be more open and it is possible for us to construct some subjects and exhibition frameworks according to the voices of the participants.<sup>492</sup>

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<sup>491</sup> Interview with Wen-Chen Shih.

<sup>492</sup> Interview with Jiang Ming-Shan, 18 April, 2014.

Viewed in the light of Shih and Jiang's comments, it is argued that although to a certain extent the special exhibitions of the NMTH actually provide open and shared spaces for the telling of stories, most practices of selecting and editing personal stories are dominated by a specific exhibition framework and given storyline.

As a significant part of highlighting Taiwanese ethnic diversity, the display of *Pingpu* Indigenous Peoples not only reveals how ethnic diversity and plural culture have been marginalised by the written history of dominant groups but also offers a democratic and plural society an example for contending that history is not static, but will be changed and challenged by different voices. The ultimate aim of *Seeing Pingpu*, as Wan-Ling Tzeng reminds us, is to

[...] present the process from duality to plurality through displaying the abundant culture and diversity within the *Pingpu* tribes. Through the exhibition strategies of 'museums as places for the representation of diverse viewpoints' and 'the multiple meanings of tribes' objects', the museum could include the voices from the tribes and local communities in order to present de-centred and diverse interpretations'.<sup>493</sup>

The construction of the historical narratives of *Pingpuzu* in the NMTH, especially in *Seeing Pingpu*, shows that in a more democratic and plural society, it is an imperative function for contemporary museums to play the role of offering a 'contact zone' for continuing dialogue among unequal powers and different voices.<sup>494</sup> From the analysis of the exhibition politics and curators' historical viewpoints in designing *Seeing*

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<sup>493</sup> Tzeng, 'The contemporary meanings of the exhibition of *Pingpu*', (X) 12- 13.

<sup>494</sup> Clifford, *Routes, Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*. Tzeng, 'The contemporary meanings of the exhibition of *Pingpu*'.

*Pingpu*, it is suggested that the NMTH tries to construct for visitors not just a purely historical past but a living social issue of recovering the ethnic culture and ethnic identity of marginalised diaspora and learning the value of ethnic diversity for the future.<sup>495</sup>

***Becoming new citizens: The changing roles and public participation of the new female immigrants in contemporary Taiwanese society***

Due to the frequency of cross-country marriage with Southeast Asian countries, new female immigrants have formed a newly-emerged group which has gradually expanded the boundaries of Taiwanese citizenship in the past decade. According to the statistics of the National Immigration Agency, in 2012 the number of new female immigrants from Vietnam, Indonesia, Thailand, The Philippines and Cambodia totalled 134,963.<sup>496</sup> For Taiwanese society, cross-country marriage has generated two contemporary phenomena. Firstly, the new female immigrants brought their native cultures of language, food, clothing, dancing and handicrafts to Taiwan, which has not only strengthened the relationship and cultural exchange between Taiwan and Southeast Asia, but has also enriched the connotations of Taiwanese culture.<sup>497</sup> Secondly, as the wives and mothers of families, the new female immigrants have on the one hand changed Taiwan's traditional family structure, but on the other hand have been facing the challenges of discrimination from Taiwan's patriarchy and the problem of

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<sup>495</sup> Tzeng, 'The contemporary meanings of the exhibition of *Pingpu*', (X) 7.

<sup>496</sup> "The Statistics of the Amount of the Foreign Brides," The National Immigration Agency of the Republic of China, accessed August 17, 2015, <http://www.immigration.gov.tw/ct.asp?xItem=1095285&ctNode=29699&mp=1>.

<sup>497</sup> Tsai-Yo Lin, *Diverse Cultural Education: The Original Culture and Local Accommodation of the New Immigrants* (Taipei: Wunan, 2012), 31.



educating their children.<sup>498</sup>

Aiming to help the new female immigrants to adapt to the new life in Taiwan, since 2006, the Ministry of Education has included the project of ‘promoting new immigrants’ culture’ into its annual policies, and has conducted a series of cultural, educational and exhibition works to ‘provide opportunities of language-learning, children-educating, skills-learning for the new female immigrants. Furthermore, the project also attempts to guide the public to understand the native culture of the foreign brides in creating the new Taiwanese culture’.<sup>499</sup> Guided by this policy, the National Museum of History conducted the exhibition *Treasures of Southeast Asia: Folk Artifacts of the Philippines, Vietnam, Thailand and Indonesia* (菲越印泰：東南亞民俗文物展) in 2007, which was the first attempt to display the new female immigrants’ culture in a national museum. By cooperating with Filipino, Thai and Vietnamese museums,

[...] a total of 266 cultural artefacts, including food culture of Southeast Asia, items of clothing, and items relating to housing, transportation, entertainment and religious beliefs are on display in this exhibition. It is hoped that both “new immigrants” and other Taiwan’s citizens will take the time to come and visit the exhibition, so that they can gain and enhance understanding of each other’s cultural background and way of life.<sup>500</sup>

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<sup>498</sup> *Ibid.*, 31. Han-Pi Chang, Wei-An Chang, Hong-Zen Wang, Chin-Gen Liou and Rei-Kun Kuo, ‘Telling stories with floating life: When museums meet the new immigrants’, *When the Local Communities Encounter with Museums: Taiwan’s Experiences and the Cross-Cultural Scope*, eds. Liao Jen-I and Wang Sung-Shan (Yilan: Lanyang Museum, 2012), 35.

<sup>499</sup> The Ministry of Education, *The Project of Promoting New Immigrants’ Culture* (The Ministry of Education, 2006).

<sup>500</sup> “Treasures of Southeast Asia: Folk Artifacts of the Philippines, Vietnam, Thailand and Indonesia,” National Museum of History, accessed August 18, 2015, [http://www.nmh.gov.tw/en/exhibition\\_2\\_3\\_21\\_333.htm?1](http://www.nmh.gov.tw/en/exhibition_2_3_21_333.htm?1).

In 2013, in order to promote the interrelationships between museums (especially local cultural centres) and new female immigrants, the Ministry of Culture conducted training courses on 'Museums and the New Residents' for museum professionals in helping the museum staff and curators to get to know the new residents and learn how to cooperate with them. Through a programme of lectures and workshops, the training course offered museum staff new curatorial insights by encouraging them to pay more attention to not only the visiting experiences of the new residents, but also how to conduct exhibitions using the voices and experiences of the target community.<sup>501</sup>

However, exhibitions on new female immigrants are rare in Taiwan's museums and the issue is unfamiliar to the general public. Even today, the issue of 'how to represent the new female immigrants in museums' is still a subject of debate for curators. When facing the new female immigrants and the rise of multiculturalism, just as in the case of *Pingpu*, the images of new female immigrants are also constructed by other advantaged cultures. By focusing on displaying food, traditional clothing, festivals, dancing and handicrafts, the exhibitions and educational activities on new female immigrants 'confine the images of new female immigrants in the partial recognition of their traditional female roles in families rather than their agency and subjectification in the public sphere'.<sup>502</sup> In this sense, the representation of gender consciousness is the first issue that museums should concern themselves with. Viewed in the light of gender equality, the museum should reflect upon the question of whether the 'images of new female immigrants that are constructed by the male gender imagination would

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<sup>501</sup> Ban-Yen Cheng, 'Museums and the new residents', in *The Newsletter of Chinese Association of Museums* (Taipei: Chinese Association of Museums, 2014), 60, 6-9.

<sup>502</sup> Chun-Kai Wang, Han-Pi Chang, Wei-An Chang and Hong-Zen Wang, 'Gender politics of new immigrant exhibition: A reflection on two exhibitions in Taiwan', in *Landscapes of Museum Exhibition*, ed. Wang Sung-Shan (Taipei: National Taiwan Museum, 2011), 340.

reproduce the gender prejudice and discrimination for the new female immigrants in Taiwanese society'.<sup>503</sup> Furthermore, comparable to the reappearance of *Pingpu*, the new immigrants are also new citizens of contemporary Taiwan, which redefine the meaning and connotations of 'us'. It is in this context that the museum should 'not only see the new immigrants as the members of other cultures but also consider their identity-transforming and living conditions after they join a new society'.<sup>504</sup>

From our discussion on the current situations of the 'Foreign Brides', it is suggested that the images of the new female immigrants are constructed and imagined. When conducting exhibitions on the new immigrants, curators should bear in mind that the new female immigrants are not only foreign others, but also citizens of Taiwanese society. Ideally speaking,

[...] the exhibitions of the new immigrants should be a competing forum for various debating discourses in which not only the curator's specific imaginations of new female immigrants could be represented but also the right of self-voicing could be empowered to the target communities of the exhibition.<sup>505</sup>

In this context, for the exhibition *Movement of People*, the most crucial display strategy is to tell the migration stories of new female immigrants from their own viewpoints in aiming to present more diverse opinions to help the public to recognise

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<sup>503</sup> *Ibid.*, 333.

<sup>504</sup> Rei-Kun Kuo, 'Museums and Cultural toleration', in *When the Local Communities Encounter with Museums: Taiwan's Experiences and the Cross-Cultural Scope*, eds. Jen-I Liao and Sung-Shan Wang (Yilan: Lanyang Museum, 2012), 53.

<sup>505</sup> Wang, 'Gender politics of new immigrant exhibition', 350.

the coexistence of different cultures and rethink the issues of human rights and social discrimination.<sup>506</sup>

***The new life and the past memories: Voices from the communities of New Female Immigrants***

In light of the current social participation of the new female immigrants in the public sphere, the best way for museum curators to invite the new female immigrants to participate in the construction of exhibitions is to cooperate with related non-government organisations such as the Trans-Asia Sisters Association (南洋姐妹會, TASA). By establishing cooperative relationships with related NGOs, the NMTH can not only communicate the design of an exhibition with the communities of new female immigrants, but could also encourage the new residents and their families come to visit the museum and participate in the dialogue with curators through the arrangement of these NGOs.<sup>507</sup>

In the process of curating *Movement of People*, the TASA plays as the most important exhibition partner which offers diverse curatorial viewpoints from the new female immigrants. The TASA originated as the 'Foreign Brides Chinese Literacy Program' which was established in 1995 in Meinon (美濃), Kaohsiung City. The name of this programme illustrates the existence of discrimination towards the new female immigrants in contemporary Taiwanese society. The first discrimination that the programme emphasises is that of language and the right to a voice. After marrying and

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<sup>506</sup> Jia-Ni Wu, 'The publicity of the museum: An analysis of the process of curating an exhibition with the subject of immigrants', in *The Collection of Papers of the Conference of Museums and Taiwan History, 2014* (Tainan: National Museum of Taiwan History, 2015), (15), 4.

<sup>507</sup> Chang, 'Telling stories with floating life', 36. Also see the Website of the TransAsia Sisters Association, <http://tasat.org.tw/page/1/2>.

moving to Taiwan, the native languages of the new female immigrants become useless and their voices are invisible in a Chinese-speaking society. Learning Chinese enables the new female immigrants to possess a useful tool to speak for themselves and recover their subjectivity in the discussion of related issues. The second discrimination comes from the term 'Foreign Brides', which implies gender discrimination – as the subordinates of Taiwan's male population, and excludes the new female immigrants as 'foreigners'. By joining the programme, the new female immigrants have begun to realise that the most effective way to challenge and change discrimination from Taiwanese society is to organise an independent and autonomous organisation. This is the context of the establishment of the TASA.<sup>508</sup>

In 2003, the TASA was established to help new female immigrants to cross the boundaries of family and play active roles in public affairs. In breaking society's fixed imagination of the new female immigrants as wives and mothers, the work of the TASA is twofold. In the first place, the TASA organises programmes of learning Chinese and children's education which create platforms in which the 'sisters' can have dialogues and share experiences with each other. Through building the common consciousness of the new female immigrants, the TASA plays a key role in cultivating the confidence of the new female immigrants in 'participating in more public affairs such as the new immigrants' movements and writing their own history'.<sup>509</sup>

The cooperative relations between the curatorial team and the TASA played important roles in collecting the stories of new female immigrants and inviting them to

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<sup>508</sup> Chiao-Lin Yang, 'Moving and dreaming: The cooperative experiences between the TASA and the National Museum of Taiwan History', in National Museum of Taiwan History, *The Guide Book of Movement of People: The Migration Stories of Taiwan* (Tainan: National Museum of Taiwan History, 2014), 77-79.

<sup>509</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

participate in the making of the exhibition. For the curators, the issue of the new female immigrants was an unexplored area, and it is difficult to make contact with the communities of new immigrants. For this reason, the curatorial team firstly visited the Southern Branch of the TASA and discussed the possibilities of conducting an exhibition. Through the participation of the TASA in the construction of the exhibition, the curatorial team could collect more first-hand objects and stories from the new female immigrants.<sup>510</sup> All the achievements of the cooperation with the TASA were displayed in the exhibition which aimed to present not only the past memories of the new female immigrants but also their ways of adapting to the new life after they become new citizens of Taiwan.

In responding to the social discrimination and gender inequality that confronted the new female immigrants, in the display unit 'Cross-Cultural Marriage' within *Movement of People*, the NMTH attempted to talk about the existing social issue of the recognition of plural cultural/national identity by telling the migration stories of the new female immigrants. As the text panel 'From Outsider to Insider' of the exhibition tells the public:

New female immigrants come to Taiwan searching for happiness and to start a family. Their experiences of changing 'from outsider to insider' gives us a way to define 'home' in a more diverse sense. Their recognition of 'home' crossing 'country' changes the definition of 'home' in a more diverse and broader way'.<sup>511</sup>

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<sup>510</sup> Wu, 'The publicity of the museum', 5.

<sup>511</sup> 'From Outsider to Insider', text panel, *Movement of People*.

Taking the concept of ‘home’ as a starting point, in the display unit ‘Start From Home’, the exhibition displayed paintings of new female immigrants’ expectations of ‘home’ and their feelings toward transitioning between both homes<sup>512</sup> that new female immigrants and their children created in the workshop conducted by the NMTH and the TASA. In so doing, the exhibition provided a more open space for the participation of the new female immigrants and their children in which the curatorial team and the museum shared the authority of narrative-making and empowered the target communities to be a part of the curatorial team (Figure 19).



(Figure 19) The display of paintings created by the new female immigrants and their children. The paintings showed not only the cooperative relationship between the NMTH and the target community but also empowered the communities’ ability to self-voice. Photo by Shih-Hui Li.

<sup>512</sup> ‘Start From Home’, text panel, *Movement of People*. National Museum of Taiwan History, *The Guide Book of Movement of People: The Migration Stories of Taiwan* (Tainan: National Museum of Taiwan History, 2014), 37.

In the next display unit, 'Endless Nostalgia', the NMTH continued the subject of 'home' not only to present new female immigrants' emotional connection with their hometown but also to introduce their difficulties in adapting to their new life in Taiwan. As the text panel 'Endless Nostalgia' explained to visitors:

Due to environmental and cultural differences, and also being away from their family, many new female immigrants had a difficult time adapting when they first came to a foreign country. While it is possible to develop a sense of home after living in a foreign country, they cannot help but to remain homesick. It's nostalgic that a bond is endless and cannot be broken.<sup>513</sup>

In order to create story spaces in which personal stories can be told through objects, the main purpose of the objects collected for the exhibition was to gather objects relating to the 'experiences of movement' and 'memories of hometown' from the communities of the new female immigrants.<sup>514</sup> The personal life objects such as letters, diaries, passports, flight tickets and books for learning Chinese were collected and displayed so as to empower the objects as agents for conveying the nostalgic emotions of new female immigrants.

In the exhibition, visitors could not read too much information or knowledge provided by the museum; all the stories were told through the display of the ordinary life objects which built emotional linkage between past memories of their home town and their present life in their new home for the target visitors – the new residents. For the curatorial team and the museum, the exhibition not only offered an open space for

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<sup>513</sup> 'Endless Nostalgia', text panel, *Movement of People*.

<sup>514</sup> Wu, 'The publicity of the museum', 16.



the general public to imagine the ‘moving experiences’ and the emotional struggle between the old and the new homes of the new female immigrants, but also raised some important questions for the public to consider. In the last section ‘Listen to You, Listen to Me’, the exhibition presented four films that recorded four stories about personal relationships between the new female immigrants and local people. Through presenting the stories of how the new female immigrants adapted to life in Taiwan and of how Taiwanese people feel about them, the exhibition attempted to raise the important questions of ‘How do they feel about living in a foreign country?’, ‘What are their expectations for the future?’ and ‘Do the Taiwanese feel differently associating with them?’<sup>515</sup> in order for the public to rethink the coexistence of various cultures of migration.

### ***Conclusion***

In this chapter, the two special exhibitions *Seeing Pingpu* and *Movement of People* were analysed in illustrating both how the NMTH responds to contemporary social issues and how the NMTH deals with diverse voices from different groups from a multicultural Taiwanese society in special exhibitions. Combining the display politics of the two exhibitions with the social issues they addressed, this chapter firstly suggests that under the imagination of a dominant culture and its social prejudices, both the images of *Pingpuzu* and the new female immigrants in Taiwanese society have been the products of ‘others’ constructions’ in which the *Pingpu* tribes and the new female immigrants have lost their subjectivity and the ability to self-voice. In the

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<sup>515</sup> ‘Listen to You, Listen to Me’, text panel, *Movement of People*.

first case of *Pingpu*, due to the long-term interaction with different foreign cultures, especially Chinese Han immigrants, the disadvantaged *Pingpu* tribes were assimilated into the Han cultural system and the ethnic identities of *Pingpu* tribes have become invisible in contemporary Taiwan. In displaying the history of the marginalisation of *Pingpu* tribes in the process of ethnic interactions, *Seeing Pingpu* showed the general public that the images of *Pingpu* indigenous people are created and reproduced by the ruling cultures of different periods. Only through knowing the setting of this historical background can the main aim of *Seeing Pingpu* – to represent *Pingpu* tribes' culture from the tribes' viewpoints – be clearly understood. In the case of the new female immigrants who emigrated to Taiwan from Southeast Asian countries for marriage, this chapter focuses on the gender imagination of Taiwan's dominant ideology of patriarchy. On the one hand, in the past, the images of the new female immigrants have been limited to their roles as wives and mothers in families. In this sense, the social roles and public participation of the new female immigrants as new Taiwanese citizens have been ignored. On the other hand, due to the barriers between their native languages and Chinese-speaking Taiwanese society, the new female immigrants have lost their own voices in allowing the public to understand their situations. Both predicaments have created social discrimination for the new female immigrants; the general public seems unconcerned with the issue of the empowerment movements of the new female immigrants.

Secondly, owing to their marginalised and disadvantaged status in master historical narratives and contemporary mainstream social discourses, both *Pingpu* and the new female immigrants have dedicated themselves to striving for self-identity and social

recognition. In the 1990s, the rise of Aboriginal cultural revitalisation and the Name-Rectification Movements had stimulated Plains Indigenous Peoples to realise that their ethnic status as 'Taiwan's First People' had been divested in the Constitution and the traditional ethnic identities of each tribe had also been blurred. Due to the deprivation of rights by the national institution, the recovery of *Pingpu's* ethnic identity for the tribes has been regarded as the restoration of historical justice which conforms to the essential spirit of Taiwanese history in deconstructing and decentralising traditional master narratives. In challenging social prejudices and discrimination, the new female immigrants realised that the best way to encourage participation in public affairs was to organise a common community which is used as a forum for participants to dialogue and share experiences. In contrast to *Pingpu* Peoples, the new female immigrants are new Taiwanese citizens, which enriches the connotations of 'the Taiwanese people' and provides a contemporary living example in interpreting the ethnicity-crossing and nationality-crossing identity of Taiwan.

Last but not least, the cultural inequality of and social prejudices towards *Pingpu* Peoples and new female immigrants permit the NMTH to display Taiwan from alternative angles in promoting cultural equality and recalling the public's attention to the realisation of social justice for marginalised minorities. When facing the challenges from the ethnic diversity and multiculturalism of contemporary Taiwanese society, exploring the marginalised past and changing status of *Pingpu* Peoples and the new female immigrants in exhibitions shows that the NMTH has been continuing to adjust

its narrative framework in dealing with ‘conflicting perspectives, competing agendas, issues of control, and who has the authority to speak on behalf of others’.<sup>516</sup>

From the analysis of both exhibitions, this chapter finds that the basic principle of exhibition construction for the two curatorial teams is to empower the target communities to speak for themselves. In *Seeing Pingpu*, diverse display strategies were applied in creating a story space where the *Pingpu* traditions could be rediscovered and reinvented by the tribes themselves rather than by other advantaged cultures. The cooperation with the tribes provided the exhibition with first-hand historical interpretations behind the objects and personal stories. Within the framework of the exhibition storyline, the museum shared its authority of history-making with the people who were displayed in the exhibition. In *Movement of People*, the use of diverse curatorial viewpoints also constituted the crucial display politics in showing the publicity of the NMTH.

In *Movement of People*, the curatorial team considered that the diverse curatorial viewpoints from exhibition partners – the communities, film crew and design team – could give the NMTH new publicity in focussing on the issues of whose exhibition, which people speak in the exhibition, and whose voices were presented in the exhibition.<sup>517</sup> In cooperating with the TASA, the curatorial team found more possibilities of connecting the migration stories of the new female immigrants to contemporary pluralistic national identity. For the new female immigrants, through arranging their stories as a part of those of other migrant groups, they realised that

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<sup>516</sup> Rhiannon Mason, Christopher Whitehead and Helen Graham, ‘One voice to many voices? Displaying polyvocality in an art gallery’, in *Museums and Communities*, ed. Viv Golding (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 163.

<sup>517</sup> Wu, ‘The publicity of the museum’, 9-10.

‘they are not alone; their experiences are parts of Taiwan’s migration society. What the new female immigrants struggle for is the recognition and equal treatment from their new Taiwanese countrymen’.<sup>518</sup>

Displaying voices from different migrant groups, the NMTH considers that ‘in order to become a diverse and tolerant society where fairness and justice are enforced, it is necessary for Taiwanese people to understand, respect and accept ‘the vision of migrants’ from different countries’.<sup>519</sup> As the exhibition informed the visitors:

Historically, Taiwan is an island of immigrants and also an island of hope that attracts people to come here to pursue their dreams. Immigrants from different periods have mutually demonstrated the spirit of immigration in Taiwan and ‘the vision of migrants’ respectively. In order to become a diverse and tolerant society where fairness and justice are enforced, Taiwan needs to understand, respect and accept ‘the vision of migrants’ from different countries. The multi-cultural element that immigrants bring with them should also be a key asset that gives impetus to the advancement and diversification of Taiwanese society.<sup>520</sup>

For Taiwan, as an immigrant society, ‘the phenomenon of migration not only exists in the past, but also in the present society of Taiwan. Moreover, such [a] phenomenon offers you, I and the Taiwanese society an opportunity to experience [it]’.<sup>521</sup> Through telling ‘living history’ rather than that of the remote past, the exhibition confirms that the nature of citizenship in contemporary Taiwan is ‘plural, crossing-ethnicity and crossing-national boundary’.<sup>522</sup>

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<sup>518</sup> Yang, ‘Moving and dreaming’, 83.

<sup>519</sup> ‘The Vision of Migrants’, text panel, *Movement of People*.

<sup>520</sup> ‘The Vision of Migrants’, text panel, *Movement of People*.

<sup>521</sup> ‘Taiwan – The Island of Immigrants’, text panel, *Movement of People*.

<sup>522</sup> Shih, ‘The history museum that is living in the present’, 7.

## Chapter 6

### Conclusion

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#### *Overview of the research: The external and internal contexts of the National Museum of Taiwan History*

In this final chapter, I provide an overview of this study of the NMTH from the perspectives of both the external Taiwanese social context and the internal development of the institution in concluding the findings of my research. Using the historical development and influence of *Bentuhua* as the principal theoretical framework, the first section of this chapter, ‘Telling a story of Taiwan’, will conclude the findings of the previous chapters and raise some potential issues in order to evaluate the contributions of the new national imagination and historical narrative in contemporary Taiwanese society. The second section, ‘Telling a story of the National Museum of Taiwan History’, centres on the internal development of the institution and concludes my case study of the NMTH within the theoretical framework of the museum’s knowledge-shaping practices. Through its discussion of how the intellectual current of *Bentuhua* provides the essential Taiwanese context for the birth of the NMTH and how the NMTH constructs itself as a space of cultural representation in anchoring the new Taiwanese national imagination, it is anticipated that this research could offer a new research model for combining museum studies, the cultural politics of Taiwanese nationalism and contemporary Taiwanese social circumstances. On the premise of history as a ‘cultural practice’,<sup>523</sup> which cannot remove historians’ current

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<sup>523</sup> Munslow, *Deconstructing History*, 15.

social and cultural contexts, the research approach and conclusions of my case study of the NMTH could form the cornerstone of the grand project of Taiwan's museums and historical heritage in representing 'Taiwaneseness' and 'Taiwanese identity' if *Bentuhua* is still the guiding principle in anchoring today's Taiwanese national construction.

### ***Telling a story of Taiwan***

The main aim of this research was to investigate how the NMTH, as a history-making institution, reconstructs the Taiwanese national imagination by representing Taiwanese history. When examining why Taiwanese society needs a new national history, this study followed the ideological development of *Bentuhua* and Taiwanese nationalism to demonstrate that the progress of the Taiwanisation of the Republic of China has witnessed a challenging national discourse which has reshaped the Taiwanese national imagination within the geographical boundary of Taiwan's Islands and their residents, rather than in Mainland China. Seeing Taiwanese history not only as an anti-discourse of the Kuomintang's Chinese history but also as a new national history, this study elevates Taiwanese history to the level of an expertise of nation-making and identity construction. Assuming that the Republic of China is and will become a Taiwanese state rather than a Chinese state, the function of the NMTH in anchoring a new national imagination can be revealed.

In this sense, the main contribution of Taiwanese history, according to my research, is its harnessing of the concept of 'Taiwanese consciousness' to illuminate the uniqueness of Taiwan and the differences between Taiwan and China in particular. As

the intellectual basis of Taiwanese history, searching for the intellectual origins of this unique concept of Taiwanese consciousness constituted the first step of this study in defining the features and connotations of Taiwanese history. In examining the discourse of *Dangwai* writers and historians of Taiwan, this study concludes that the imagined construction of Taiwanese consciousness is largely rooted in past Taiwanese experiences of colonial rule and repression from other nations. According to Shu-Hong Chen, Mi-Cha Wu and Tsui-Lien Chen's arguments, the historical experiences informed by anti-Japanese sentiment not only provide an intellectual basis for the historical interpretation of Taiwanese nationalism but also contributes to the political discourses of *Dangwai*'s democratic movements.<sup>524</sup>

Focusing on narrating the birth of a homogeneous community under Japanese colonial rule, Taiwanese history, for Taiwanese nationalists, naturally presents itself as a continuing process of colonisation and anti-colonisation no matter whether it faces Japan or the settler state of the Kuomintang's Republic of China.<sup>525</sup> For *Dangwai*'s nationalist narrators and historians, the adoption of post-colonist discourse as the main approach in constructing Taiwanese uniqueness is a more effective way to stimulate political support. As Yi-Hua Jiang points out, 'the post-colonist discourse emphasises the importance of historical experiences in the process of identity-constructing, which consolidates the unequal relations between China/Taiwan, colonise/colonised, and centre/marginalised. The unequal relations have been stimulating Taiwanese to change

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<sup>524</sup> Chen, 'Taiwan Consciousness: the Cornerstone of *Dangwai* Democratic Movements'. Wu, 'The Establishment and Issues of Taiwan History'. Chen, *The Resistance and Identity of Taiwanese People*.

<sup>525</sup> Wakabayashi, *The Taiwanisation of the Republic of China*, 101.



the power structure'.<sup>526</sup>

Through criticising colonial rule and defining the boundary between 'us' and 'others', Taiwanese history can be regarded as having been empowered as a form of national history. It is in the post-colonial sense that the link between Taiwanese nationalism, Taiwanese identity and Taiwanese history can be built. The reconstruction of Taiwanese history, as A-Chin Hsiau's research indicates, forms the cornerstone of Taiwan's cultural politics of nationalism.<sup>527</sup> Historians such as Mi-Cha Wu, Edward Wang and A-Chin Hsiau also suggest that Taiwanese history plays a key role in providing Taiwanese writers with a sense of identity to legitimate their nationalist arguments regarding local literature and local language.<sup>528</sup>

However, under the cultural hegemony of the Kuomintang government's China-centred national imagination, Taiwanese history was originally marginalised as a form of local history within the wider context of Chinese history. By building historical connections between Taiwan and China, the main purpose of earlier studies on Taiwan and its history was to use Taiwan as an epitome and laboratory of Chinese culture. If Taiwanese history is the key to constructing Taiwanese nationalism and shaping Taiwanese identity, the most important task for historians is to build a Taiwanese history which is independent from Chinese history.

The findings of this research demonstrate that the most significant purpose of building an independent Taiwanese history for Taiwanese historians is to establish professional and institutional Taiwanese history within Taiwanese universities, which

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<sup>526</sup> Jiang, *Liberalism, Nationalism and National Identity*, 180.

<sup>527</sup> Hsiau, *Reconstructing Taiwan*.

<sup>528</sup> Wu, 'The Establishment and Issues of Taiwan History'. Wang, *Fifty Years of Taiwanese Historiography*. Hsiau, *Return to Reality*. Hsiau, *Reconstructing Taiwan*, 276.

is the most important step in according Taiwanese history the status of national history.<sup>529</sup> In illustrating how Taiwanese history has been institutionalised as an independent academic discipline, this study has investigated the growing number of MA theses dealing with Taiwanese history during the peak of *Bentuhua* from the 1980s to the 1990s.<sup>530</sup> Analysis of the topics and research methodologies of MA theses shows that since the 1990s Taiwanese history has gradually cast off its subordinate status under Chinese history and found its independent research scope to reinterpret Taiwan – its land and its people.

Compared to the traditional China-centred national history, this new independent institutionalised Taiwanese history reflects the requirements of a more democratic and diverse society in discovering marginal source materials, issues and viewpoints, and applying new methodologies. As discussed in Chapter 1, the rediscovery of marginalised and forgotten historical memories such as the 228 Incident and the White Terror shows that in the post-authoritarian period the Taiwanese government has dedicated itself to pursuing Transitional Justice – the compensation of the past violation of personal rights from the national power - by memorialising national trauma and recovering historical truths.<sup>531</sup> The rise of the revitalisation movements of Taiwan's Indigenous Peoples since the 1990s reflects the emphasis on multiculturalism and ethnic diversity in contemporary Taiwanese society. It is in this context that Taiwan's Plains Indigenous Peoples have begun to search for their ethnic identity and

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<sup>529</sup> Also see S. Carvalho, and F. Gemenne, eds., *Nations and Their Histories: Constructions and Representations* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

<sup>530</sup> Li, 'The Research on Taiwan History at the Graduate Schools'. Shih, 'An Analysis on the MA Dissertations of Graduate Schools of History in Taiwan'.

<sup>531</sup> Lai, *Research Report of the 228 Incident*. Wu, 'Transitional Justice and Historical Memories'. Wu, 'Trend of national identities in Taiwan 1992-2005'.

recover their forgotten ethnic historical culture.<sup>532</sup> The development of ‘Taiwan’s Island history’ provides a new historical approach for understanding Taiwan in the framework of World history. Taiwan’s oceanic character emphasises the significance of Taiwan as an island and a place for migration and ethnic interaction, which is different from the continental culture of China.<sup>533</sup> The historical perspective of ‘Taiwan’s Island History’ focuses on the long-term interactions between the land and people rather than temporary political regimes. This new interpretation of the Taiwanese past not only reflects the influence of Western historical methods, especially the French *Annales* School since the 1970s, but also opens up a new research model for studies on Taiwanese ethnic diversity and multiculturalism.<sup>534</sup>

From the discussion of the new topics and methodologies of Taiwanese history, it is concluded that there are five new developments which mark the uniqueness of Taiwanese history:

- (1) The decentralisation of Chinese Han-centred master narratives.
- (2) Re-writing history from the perspectives of Taiwanese people rather than foreign rulers’ viewpoints.
- (3) The emphasis on Taiwanese ethnic diversity.
- (4) The influence of modern Western historical methods.
- (5) The broadening of research topics and research scope.

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<sup>532</sup> Chang, ‘The Search for the Lost Tribes of Formosa’. Chan, ‘The Interpretation of Modern Pingpu Phenomenon’.

<sup>533</sup> Tsao, ‘Another approach of Taiwanese historical study’.

<sup>534</sup> Chang, ‘The Search for the Lost Tribes of Formosa’. Chan, ‘Between Interpretations and De-Construction’.

According to my research, these new developments of Taiwanese history indicate that the progress of *Bentuhua* and political democratisation in Taiwan over the past 40 years, has witnessed not only the slight change in national identity from Chinese to Taiwanese, but also challenging histories from different historical viewpoints and groups. Firstly, in investigating the emergence of the plural understanding of national identity in contemporary Taiwan, this study contends that with increasing public attention towards ethnic diversity and multiculturalism since the 1990s, the definitions of ‘Taiwanese identity’ and ‘Taiwanese people’ have gradually been expanded. Within this context, Taiwan has been redefined as an immigrant country with a liberal constitutional democracy. In this sense, the importance of ethnic background is lower than the preservation of the community’s culture and the establishment of a civic society.<sup>535</sup> Secondly, as a de-centralised and de-constructed historical narrative, Taiwanese history shows that in a democratic and multicultural society, history should exist as an open and inclusive mutual world in which different voices can compete with each other in order to guarantee that no one single voice will become dominant.

The findings presented in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 are not intended to validate *which* national identity – Chinese or Taiwanese – is ‘real’ or ‘politically correct’ for Taiwan, but rather to illustrate that in Taiwan the shaping of Taiwan’s national identity is a process constructed through cultural and political movements.<sup>536</sup> In this sense, I agree with A-Chin Hsiau’s viewpoint that ‘the nature of ethnic identity and national identity is “constructed”’. The appropriate way to understand collective identity is to point out that the collective identity is influenced by the changing of history and the redefinition

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<sup>535</sup> Jiang, *Liberalism, Nationalism and National Identity*.

<sup>536</sup> Hsiau, *Reconstructing Taiwan*, 335.

of political situations'.<sup>537</sup> In the case of *Bentuhua* and its relationship to the shaping of Taiwanese national identity, it is suggested that all the concepts of Taiwanese ethnic relations, Taiwanese people, Taiwanese identity and Taiwanese history are constructed and changing, forming a unique process of de-centralisation and de-construction focusing on challenging the Kuomintang's Chinese Han-centred national history and policies of national assimilation.

It is this particular Taiwanese situation that enables the NMTH to become a special case in linking the museum's historical narratives to the greater contexts of post-war Taiwanese *Bentuhua* history and political development. Outlining the processes of *Bentuhua* and Taiwanese democratisation has provided my research with a comprehensive Taiwanese context in analysing the questions of why Taiwanese society needs a new history-making and identity-making institution, and how the debate centring on *Bentuhua*, Taiwanese consciousness and Taiwanese subjectivity has been negotiated and transformed into the NMTH's knowledge system.

### ***Telling a story of the National Museum of Taiwan History***

On the premise that *Bentuhua* provides the intellectual context for the building of the NMTH, the second part of my research aimed to link the institution (its historical narratives and knowledge-shaping) with Taiwanese society (Taiwanese *Bentuhua* and democratisation) by presenting how the NMTH transformed the new directions of Taiwanese history into its politics of display and collecting strategies. In focussing on the internal context of the development of the NMTH, this chapter proposes to

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<sup>537</sup> *Ibid.*, 335.

conclude the findings of the previous chapters from two angles: (1) How the NMTH transforms the achievements of Taiwanese historical research into a new museum discourse by valuing the NMTH's policies of collecting and display. (2) How the museum's discourse reflects the past, present and future of Taiwanese society.

The building of the NMTH is a long-term project which emerged in a period when the *Bentuhua* current had reached its peak in the 1990s. Within a social atmosphere which demanded the presentation of local Taiwanese culture at national museums, as illustrated in Chapter 2, the building of the NMTH was not an independent case, as many other museums focussing on the representation of Taiwan had been established. In order to offer a comprehensive account of the NMTH, my research divides the story of this institution into two main phases: the preparatory phase from 1992 to 2000 and the phase following its opening to the public in 2011.

During the preparatory phase, the focus of my research was to analyse the negotiating process of how a professional museum team composed of historians, designers and curators designed the exhibition framework of Taiwanese history. According to the meeting recording documented by the *Research Project of the Exhibition Framework of the NMTH* (2000), in constructing an exhibition framework which transformed 'Taiwanese history' into a 'museum of Taiwanese history', the main aim of the museum founders was to define the following: 'what is Taiwan?', 'what is Taiwanese culture?' and 'who are the Taiwanese people?'.<sup>538</sup> In addition, by integrating the existing research achievements of Taiwanese history into the museum's exhibition, the founding members, including historian Sheng-Yen Chang, Mi-Cha Wu

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<sup>538</sup> The Preparatory Office of the National Museum of Taiwan History (2000).

and Chin-Tang Tsai, all anticipated that this new museum would be built as a permanent institution, which could not be changed or even closed when facing different political ideologies or national imaginations. It is in this sense that the core politics of display at the NMTH were dedicated to presenting Taiwanese history from the perspectives of folk culture and people's lives rather than from the standpoint of traditional political history.<sup>539</sup>

The original aim to establish a museum of Taiwanese folk culture enables the NMTH to adopt diverse historical approaches and insights which represent the de-centralised nature of Taiwanese history. Following the principle of public history, the NMTH recognises that ordinary people have the ability and the right to participate in the making of history. By collecting objects from people's everyday lives and recalling visitors' memories, the NMTH can be regarded as the first national museum in Taiwan to use both story-telling and material culture to anchor the national imagination. Focusing on collecting and presenting the objects and stories of Taiwanese people, the NMTH depicts a national boundary confining people's national imagination within the geographical area of Taiwan's Islands. The museum's emphasis on the interactions between people and the land demonstrates that the new methodologies of Taiwanese history, especially Yong-Ho Tsao's 'Taiwan's Island History', play a key role in understanding Taiwanese international interactions and ethnic diversity.

Focusing on the three core research areas of Taiwanese international relations, ethnic interactions and modernisation, the Preparatory Office launched a series of

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<sup>539</sup> *Ibid.*

research and collecting projects in building the museum as a centre for studying Taiwanese history. In representing Taiwan within the system of World history, the Preparatory Office dedicated itself to collecting old maps and documents written by Western missionaries in order to not only present diverse images of Taiwan through the eyes of others, but also to emphasise Taiwan's unique oceanic culture. In studying Taiwanese ethnic interactions, the rediscovery of the historical memories of Taiwanese Indigenous Peoples, especially *Pingpu* indigenous peoples, provided alternative, diverse and non-Han-centred viewpoints from within Taiwan. By conducting workshops, oral interviews and video recordings, the Preparatory Office collected people's viewpoints and presented diverse historical insights, which follow the principle of constructing de-centralised and de-constructed historical narratives. The individual preparatory works and the philosophy underpinning these have shaped the museum's core knowledge system and became the guiding principles in designing the permanent exhibition and special exhibitions of the later NMTH.

As the intellectual and educational core of the NMTH, the permanent exhibition *Our Land, Our People: The Story of Taiwan* comprehensively represents the intellectual works and historical viewpoints of the museum in one coherent historical narrative. Based on the analysis of the exhibition's panel texts and interviews with museum curators, it is suggested that *Our Land, Our People* successfully connects the museum's historical narrative with the most important character of Taiwanese history and Taiwanese identity. In this sense, the exhibition could be regarded as the museumisation of a new national discourse.

In defining 'whose history should be presented in the museum', the exhibition



tackles the core of *Bentuhua* discourses in answering the question ‘who are actors in Taiwanese history?’. In order to provide an inclusive and elastic interpretation, the NMTH frames this in terms of contemporary multicultural identity and defines the concept of ‘Taiwanese people’ as an identity of ‘self-affirmation’. According to the findings of my research, it is suggested that in designing Taiwan’s national identity in a national museum, the NMTH offers a relatively democratic and open-ended answer to the public, which responds to the museum’s original objective to remove the political interference from competing political ideologies. The national identity presented in the NMTH is plural as the result of the long-term negotiation between Chinese identity and Taiwanese identity. When examining the shaping of contemporary Taiwanese plural national identity, this study suggests that *Bentuhua* discourses are insufficient for our understanding of Taiwan’s ethnic diversity, whereas the rise of multiculturalism since the 1990s could provide new ways of thinking about the contemporary public role of national museums in displaying diversity.<sup>540</sup>

In order to represent contemporary Taiwanese plural national identity, the display strategy of *Our Land, Our People* is to locate Taiwan within the system of world history by emphasising the roles of Taiwan in the framework of international relations. Using this script, the permanent exhibition on the one hand weakens the historical connection between Taiwan and Mainland China and provides historical interpretations in explaining the formation of contemporary migration and Taiwan’s multicultural society. Viewing the permanent exhibition in the light of nationalist construction, the two purposes of the exhibition script confirm Taiwan’s oceanic

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<sup>540</sup> Lu, ‘National museums, national narrative and indigenous peoples’.

character, international status and abundant ethnic interactions which highlight the uniqueness of Taiwan and Taiwanese people, and their differences from China and Chinese people.

In addition to designing Taiwanese identity, as a ‘museum for people’, the NMTH inherits the original design in building a folklore museum, which focuses upon the continuity of people’s lives and culture. From the script of *Our Land, Our People*, it is suggested that traditional rulers’ stories are hidden, while the new historical insights from people provide diverse and alternative historical angles for the NMTH in presenting Taiwanese history which has not been taught in classes. In confirming that everyone has his or her own ways of seeing and reconstructing the past, a wealth of dioramas, figures, models, building reconstructions and historical scenes are arranged in *Our Land, Our People* in order to create an interactive story space for visitors to recall their memories and tell their own history. In contrast to other traditional museums in Taiwan, the NMTH provides a considerable amount of lively historical source materials, such as objects from people’s everyday lives, to trigger visitors’ memories and acts of storytelling. By doing so, the NMTH can be regarded as successfully establishing itself as a contact zone in which various challenging voices from different groups can be inclusively and equally represented.

However, it must be borne in mind that the NMTH’s actual public role and its interactions with people could not be revealed if we merely concern on the research projects completed by museum professionals who work in the back-stage area to which the public is denied access.<sup>541</sup> Only by displaying the back-stage works to the

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<sup>541</sup> Bennett, *Pasts Beyond Memory*.

‘front-stage’ can the cultural barriers between the museum’s expertise and public perception be disrupted.

In examining the interactions between the museum’s knowledge system and the public response, this study concurs with the concepts of ‘ideal readers’ and ‘ideal reading texts’ that Wan-Cheng Chang applies to analyse visitors’ perceptions of the exhibition narrative.<sup>542</sup> In this sense, the main purpose of the interviews with museum visitors in Chapter 4 is to present whether the exhibition narratives and methods of representation in *Our Land, Our People* could provide visitors with an ideal text environment which deploys elements in an effective manner to help visitors to read, perceive and construct their own meanings.

In my study of visitors to *Our Land, Our People*, it is evident that most interviewees believe that a coherent and smooth exhibition narrative could help them to understand the Taiwanese past more easily than the fragmentary historical knowledge they were taught at school. Using the approach of narrative identity,<sup>543</sup> this study shows that it is not only the visual exhibition elements, but also visitors’ psychological need to read a coherent story which enables *Our Land, Our People* to become a new visiting experience for interviewees. This initial research finding confirms the ‘back-stage’ work of changing the exhibition design from five separate gallery spaces to one half-opened gallery space.<sup>544</sup> From both museum’s professional and visitors’ opinions, it is concluded that the idea to build a museum displaying folklore and people’s history in a long-term and continuous historical framework is better than displaying separate

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<sup>542</sup> Chang, *The Narrative Turn of Contemporary Museum Exhibition*.

<sup>543</sup> Straub, ‘Telling stories, making history’. Polkinghorne, ‘Narrative psychology and historical consciousness’.

<sup>544</sup> Chen, ‘The designing concept of the permanent exhibition’.

political regimes in a society with a self-affirming national identity. In avoiding the display of a specific dominant cultural ideology, the NMTH announces that the Taiwanese history represented at the museum is ‘neutral’ and ‘non-political’.

The second finding derives from my analysis of how the individual visitor sees the past by using personal memories and life experiences and his or her identity with Taiwan. Experiencing *Bentuhua* and the changing of the national imagination over 40 years, this study suggests that in Taiwan there exists a generation gap of identity between older visitors who were educated using China-centred history and younger visitors who are taught with a Taiwan-centred history. Using Jörn Rüsen’s argument on historical consciousness, this study goes a step further to investigate how the different national imaginations and historical education between different generations form the prior knowledge in shaping visitors’ historical consciousness of seeing the past, valuing the present and imagining the future.<sup>545</sup> Furthermore, this study has also investigated how individual visitors’ memories and life experiences in the past furnish material sources in visitors’ acts of storytelling and personal history-making.

The visitor study element of my research, as Chapter 4 concludes, dealt with the interactions between historical consciousness, memory and identity in the framework of people’s narrative-making. In dealing with individual interviewees’ oral data, the visitor study suggests that the use of memory in narrating the past is not merely a personal psychological meaning-making process. Following the theory that personal memory is the product of a particular social context and should be regarded as a part of collective social memory,<sup>546</sup> this study combines visitors’ stories and personal

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<sup>545</sup> Rüsen, ‘Historical consciousness’. Rüsen, *History: Narration – Interpretation – Orientation*.

<sup>546</sup> Halbwachs, ‘The reconstruction of the past’. David Lowenthal, *Possessed by the Past: The Heritage*

opinions with the transformation of Taiwanese collective social memory in the context of *Bentuhua*; while indicating that most visitors accept the museum's self-affirming definition of the 'Taiwanese people'.

### ***A museum in a transitional society***

Both the NMTH's politics of display and visitors' voices presented in this research show that since the *Bentuhua* movement formed a de-constructive force in challenging the old national imagination during the past 40 years, Taiwan has entered into a transitional stage in which national identity is changing and diverse voices are competing with each other, confirming that there are no longer any sole, dominant voices in a plural society. As an influential and identity-shaping cultural politics of Taiwanese nationalism, *Bentuhua* has successfully shaped Taiwanese identity, creating the mainstream identity in contemporary Taiwanese society. According to the 'Surveys on Changes in the Taiwanese/Chinese Identity of Taiwanese' conducted by the Election Study Centre at the National Chengchi University, in the past 10 years the percentage of people who identify as 'Taiwanese' has risen from 45% (2005) to 59% (2015), while the percentage of 'both Taiwanese and Chinese' has decreased from 43.4% (2005) to 33.7% (2015).<sup>547</sup> The rise of Taiwanese identity in this island shows that the *Bentuhua* movements, especially since the DPP ruled the government from 2000 to 2008, Taiwanese nationalist discourse has been enhanced and infused into the

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*Crusade and the Spoils of History* (New York: The Free Press, 1996). Stanford, *The Nature of Historical Knowledge*. Connerton, *How Societies Remember*. Pierre Nora, *Realms of Memory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).

<sup>547</sup> *The source of data: Trends in Core Political Attitudes among Taiwanese*, (The Election Study Centre, National Chengchi University).

younger generation's education through a new high school historical curriculum.<sup>548</sup>

Although the survey shows that nearly 50% of Taiwanese people abandon their Chinese identity and identify themselves as Taiwanese; meanwhile identifying Taiwan as an independent sovereign state rather than as part of China, when facing the continuing ideological, economic, cultural and political challenges from Mainland China, most Taiwanese people agree that the best way to maintain peace between the Taiwan Strait and Taiwanese democracy is to leave the issue of unification-independence aside.<sup>549</sup> According to the 'Survey on Changes in the Unification-Independence Stances of Taiwanese' conducted by the Election Study Centre, National Chengchi University, in 2015, 59.5% of Taiwanese people choose to maintain the status quo.<sup>550</sup>

The two surveys illustrate that in contemporary Taiwan, the extreme opposition between Chinese nationalism and Taiwanese nationalism which represent the two sides of the political spectrum has gradually lost its attraction for the public. In this society, no traditional one-centred national discourse will become dominant while an inclusive and elastic discourse emphasising people's identity with the land of Taiwan, rather than an independent Taiwanese nation state, has the potential to represent the various

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<sup>548</sup> Wang, 'The Controversy of *Renshi Taiwan* Textbooks'.

<sup>549</sup> When the Kuomintang returned to power in 2008, President Yin-Jeou Ma (馬英九) began to amend Taiwan's national discourse back to reflecting the constitutional status of the Republic of China. Following the framework of the 'one-China principle', the Kuomintang government and President Ma emphasised that the relationship between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait is characterised by 'no unification, no independence, and no war'. See the interview with President Ma, 8 March 2011, *Financial Times*. Also see Mainland Affairs Council, *The Reference Materials of Mainland Affairs* (Mainland Affairs Council 2012), 7.

<sup>550</sup> According to the 'Survey on Changes in the Unification-Independence Stances of Taiwanese' conducted by the Election Study Centre, National Chengchi University, in 2015, 34.6% of Taiwanese people support the option of 'maintain status quo, decide at later date', while 24.9% of Taiwanese people choose the option of 'maintain status quo indefinitely'. In total, 59.5% of Taiwanese choose to maintain the status quo (*The source of data: Trends in Core Political Attitudes among Taiwanese* (The Election Study Centre, National Chengchi University).

historical memories and national imaginations of diverse Taiwanese ethnic groups.<sup>551</sup>

In Taiwan the national museum, as discussed in Chapter 2, ‘represents the nation and is the product of national policies’.<sup>552</sup> If multicultural identity forms the core of contemporary Taiwan’s identity politics, the NMTH should be expected to represent this new ‘Taiwaneseness’. In this sense, the historical narratives of the NMTH can be considered as those of a politically-guided institution rather than merely of a neutral and non-political folk museum. The political stance or political correctness of the NMTH, as interpreted in this study, is to represent Taiwan as a multi-ethnic immigrant country that is recognised by a Taiwanese constitutional democratic institution.<sup>553</sup> As Mi-Cha Wu, the former director of the NMTH, indicates, the historical narratives of the NMTH could not completely remove the category of nationalism and merely focus on the land and the people. When talking about the politics of display, Wu suggests that the NMTH

[...] should understand the standpoint, aim, and strategies of the institution. [...] The standpoint of the NMTH is to respond to the circumstances of Taiwanese society. A museum should provide a sphere for public debating rather than aiming to be a neutral or non-political public place.<sup>554</sup>

As a national museum in a transitional Taiwanese society, the NMTH should establish itself as a forum for public debate. In contrast to the old homogeneous

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<sup>551</sup> Wakabayashi, *The Progress of the Taiwanisation of the Republic of China*, 493.

<sup>552</sup> Research, Development and Evaluation Commission, Executive Yuan (2012) *The Research on the Organisation and Management of National Museums* (Taipei: Research, Development and Evaluation Commission, Executive Yuan).

<sup>553</sup> Interview with Mi-Cha Wu.

<sup>554</sup> Interview with Mi-Cha Wu. Also see Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (New York: Routledge, 1995). J. Barrett, *Museums and the Public Sphere* (Blackwell, 2011).

national museums which display dominant master narratives, the NMTH should make itself more open to building connections with society and with communities. In Chapter 5 this study analysed the issue-based special exhibitions in presenting the social concerns of the NMTH, how the NMTH responds to social needs and how the museum displays contemporary Taiwanese society using different display strategies from those of the permanent exhibition. Shaped during the preparatory phase, the general Taiwanese history presented in the permanent exhibition is comparatively old and presents this history as ‘a matter of negotiation: a dynamic power play of competing knowledge, intentions and interests’.<sup>555</sup> Although the NMTH stresses that the museum represents Taiwanese history from people’s viewpoints and folklore in order to avoid the interference from political power, people’s voices and viewpoints from communities are heard less in the permanent exhibition. The authoritative acts of history-writing and issue selection are still controlled by museum professionals and are shared less with the public.

Opened in a transitional period when the old one-centred national discourse and political authorisation have been continuing transformed into multicultural identity and constitutional democracy, the NMTH realises that the aim and purposes of national museums in Taiwan should be adjusted. In responding to the challenges from the emerging multiculturalism, the NMTH has been concerning on the issues of how a new national museum can ‘provide equal opportunities for each ethnic and social group to voice for themselves’<sup>556</sup> since the preparatory stage. It is guided by the policies of

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<sup>555</sup> Macdonald, ‘Exhibitions of power and powers of exhibition’, 3.

<sup>556</sup> National Museum of Taiwan History, *The Annual Report of the National Museum of Taiwan History 2014* (Tainan: National Museum of Taiwan History, 2015), 17.



cultural equality and contemporary needs for promoting social inclusion that the NMTH constructs a series of special exhibitions in talking about social issues.

Compared to the permanent exhibition, there are three features which make the special exhibitions of the NMTH a new development in Taiwan's museums. Firstly, the special exhibitions show the representation of diverse historical interpretation. By offering the communities more opportunities to engage in exhibition construction and narrative-making, the NMTH firstly attempts to share its authority with the public. Secondly, in order to achieve the aim of 'respecting and tolerating diverse communities and representing multi-culture in all exhibitions of the museum',<sup>557</sup> the special exhibitions deploy more video data, oral stories and interactive devices than the permanent exhibition to enable visitors greater access the story space that exhibitions create. Lastly, in responding to the various needs of each social group, the special exhibitions show that the NMTH pays more attention to social phenomena in progress by providing a possible space for public dialogue. Focusing on the function of linking the past, present and future, historical narrative could be used not only as a means of telling the story of the past, but also of describing the present and providing guiding principles for the future.

All the changes of the exhibition design and the politics of display presented in the special exhibitions can, according to the findings of my research, be regarded as the results of the interactions between the museum and Taiwanese society. In the exhibitions *Seeing Pingpu* and *Migration Stories*, the search for the ethnic identity of Taiwan's Plains Indigenous Peoples and the gender issues generated from the

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<sup>557</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

conditions of new female immigrants are still ongoing social issues for debate. When viewing the two special exhibitions in the context of contemporary transitional Taiwanese society, it is suggested that museums in a transitional society should pay more attention to marginalised social problems by dealing with multiple voices and advancing cultural equality.

### ***The contributions and the future development of this study***

In Taiwan, Taiwanese nationalism and the *Bentuhua* movements are newly-developed research topics. Most of the systematic and comprehensive literature I consulted in this study was published after 2010. In contrast to the approaches of sociology and political science, this study has utilised the new research angles of historiography and museum studies to show that in Taiwan the development of national museums has also experienced the progress of *Bentuhua* and democratisation. This signifies that in museums the old single-centred national discourse of the Kuomintang has been gradually de-constructed by the new paradigms of a multicultural national discourse.<sup>558</sup> However, viewed in the light of the construction of a new, alternative national discourse and its intellectual relations to Taiwanese nationalism, the power relationship between political ideology and the museum's knowledge-shaping practices is still unchanging. It is in this sense that this study concludes that the NMTH is built as an agency to advance the government's *Bentuhua*

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<sup>558</sup> Chu, *The changing relationship between the state and museums: A case study of Taiwan (1908-2008)*. Chu, 'Political change and the national museum in Taiwan'. Chu, 'The national forces in the development of national museums'. Lee, 'The construction of National Imaginaries in Taiwan's museums'. Lee, 'The imagination politics of museums and archive committees'. Lee, 'The politics and science of collection'. Lee, 'Reflections on the Exhibitions of Ethnicity'. Lu, 'The relationships among national museums, national narrative and indigenous peoples'. Lu, 'From separated world to us'. Wang and Shen 'Who's Formosa?'. Wu, 'Constructing a Museum of National History'.

policies, especially those of the DPP government, and transform people's national imagination from that of China to Taiwan.

With all these issues in mind, the contributions of this study for Taiwan's academic circles are threefold. Firstly, for *Bentuhua* studies of the past 20 years, this study provides a new research scope for interpreting how *Bentuhua* as a new expertise is reconstructing the national imagination of Taiwanese people and guiding the establishment of national cultural policies in contemporary Taiwan. Secondly, in regard to Taiwanese historiography, this study presents a comprehensive and systematic analysis of the uniqueness of Taiwanese history. In the light of postmodernism and public history, this study defines Taiwanese history as a de-centralised and de-constructed challenging history which aims to strive for the status of national history, on an equal footing with Chinese history. In building connections with Taiwanese nationalism and the *Bentuhua* ideology, this study empowers Taiwanese history as the governmentality of national history and, in addition, emphasises the role of history in Taiwan's national reconstruction. Thirdly, from the perspective of museum studies, this thesis is the first comprehensive study to examine the *Bentuhua* of Taiwan's national museums in the post-authoritarian period, which successfully establishes a theoretical framework combining Taiwanese nationalism, national history-writing, national imagination and national museums. On this basis, this study not only investigates the knowledge-shaping and identity-anchoring practices of the NMTH, but also develops this to reveal the phenomenon of the search for Taiwanese modernity and shaping identity with Taiwan in contemporary Taiwan's national museums.

Continuing the study on the construction of historical narratives in the NMTH, in the future, I propose to extend the research scope to other works and functions of the NMTH. For example, regarding the educational role of the NMTH and its cooperation with local schools, the topic of the museum's public service and the functions of social education could be explored further. Furthermore, through studying other new special exhibitions and the amendment of the permanent exhibition, future research projects will continue to focus on the social concerns of the NMTH in order to evaluate to what degree the museum responds to the diverse needs of Taiwanese society.

In addition to developing this study to encompass other topics inside the institution, the future development of this study will locate the NMTH in the broader context of other national museums displaying Taiwanese history. By doing so, the meaning of the NMTH will not only constitute new attempt to represent Taiwanese history comprehensively in a single museum, but also a cornerstone for constructing the grand project of displaying Taiwan in museums since the 1990s. The investigations of *Bentuhua*, Taiwanese identity, and Taiwanese history in this study provide a historical interpretation for readers and researchers for how the new paradigm of displaying Taiwan emerged and has gradually become the main aim for building new national museums in Taiwan. In the future, I propose to apply the theoretical approach, arguments and findings of this study to go a step further to investigate the other four national museums in Taiwan. All four national museums tackle the specific subjects and issues of Taiwanese history that I have dealt with in this study. By combining this study with an investigation of the four national museums, I hope that this study could be developed into a more comprehensive research project to discuss how Taiwanese

history and the specific circumstances of Taiwanese society are constructed and represented in an 'imagined Taiwan's museum system'. Within the major research framework, three minor topics related to those presented in this study will be considered:

(1) Establishing a multicultural national literature: The National Museum of Taiwan Literature (國立臺灣文學館)

The first future development of this study will extend the studies on Taiwan's democratisation, social diversity and multiculturalism to investigate the National Museum of Taiwan Literature (NMTL). Like the writing of national history, the establishment of a national literature is another imperative component of the cultural politics of Taiwanese nationalism.<sup>559</sup> Examining Taiwanese literature in the context of *Bentuhua*, it is suggested that Taiwan's nationalist writers 'had created Taiwanese literature as national literature in giving the history of Taiwanese literature specific meanings'.<sup>560</sup> For these nationalist writers, 'the existence of a unique literature tradition could prove the existence of a nation. Accompanying with the creation of a new literature tradition, a new national identity will emerge'.<sup>561</sup> Furthermore, by representing the diverse connotations of Taiwanese literature and focusing on the interactions between writers and their particular social conditions, the narratives and display of the NMTL also reflect the characters of contemporary Taiwan's diverse society and migration culture.

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<sup>559</sup> Hsiau, *Reconstructing Taiwan*.

<sup>560</sup> *Ibid.*, 229.

<sup>561</sup> *Ibid.*, 229.

(2) Searching for Taiwan's Enlightenment and modernity: The National Taiwan Museum (國立臺灣博物館) and Taiwan Museum System (臺灣博物館系統)

The 'Project of Establishing Taiwan Museum System in the core area of the Capital City' (首都核心區台灣博物館建置計畫), conducted by the Council for Cultural Affairs in 2005, represents another museum's system of interpretation in displaying Taiwan and telling Taiwanese history. Centring on the National Taiwan Museum (NTM), the project plans to rejuvenate adjacent historical buildings of the Japanese colonial period in building a cultural park which displays Taiwanese modern history in the capital city, Taipei. The core of the project is driven by the NTM which aims to interpret and display Taiwanese natural history and ecological diversity. Furthermore, the Council of Cultural Affairs also plans to refurbish the historical buildings of the Department of Taiwan Railways into the Museum of Taiwan Modernity (臺灣現代性博物館) in interpreting the establishment of modern knowledge and construction in Taiwan. The old Monopoly Office will also be refurbished, becoming the Museum of Taiwan Industrial History (臺灣產業史博物館) and focusing on presenting the uniqueness of Taiwan's industry and economic development.<sup>562</sup> This is an ongoing project and has not been completed. If the Taiwan Museum System could be built in the future, it will provide the public with alternative ways of understanding Japanese colonial Taiwanese history in a grand museum complex whose location is also the historical site of the emergence of Taiwan's modernity. This museum complex will therefore form a historical space in which the governmentality and political order of the Japanese

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<sup>562</sup> "The news of culture: The launch of the Taiwan Museum System," The Ministry of Culture, accessed August 30 2015, [http://www.moc.gov.tw/information\\_250\\_22256.html](http://www.moc.gov.tw/information_250_22256.html).

colonial government can be represented.<sup>563</sup>

(3) The advancement of human rights: The National 228 Memorial Museum (二二八國家紀念館)

Since the change of ruling party in 2000, the issue of transitional justice has become seminal in memorialising traumatic national historical memories and criticising the Kuomintang's authoritarian rule. With the progress of political democratisation and the opening of classified official documents, the 228 Incident and the White Terror, once seen as political taboos and marginalised by the Kuomintang government, have been recovered and written into the new independent institutional Taiwanese history. Opened on 28 February 2011, The National 228 Memorial Museum is the first national museum which aims to heal national trauma and ethnic conflicts by restoring the honour of victims and realising historical justice by presenting the historical realities of this disordered period. Through displaying the traumatic memories of the 228 Incident, the National 228 Memorial Museum attempts to provide a public forum for the victims, their posterity and the general public to examine the 'advancement of Taiwan's human rights and liberal democracy in the past decades'.<sup>564</sup> The building of the museum shows that when facing the appeal of realising historical justice in post-authoritarian Taiwanese society, transitional justice and human rights will become new issues in museums' narratives and continue to play important roles in achieving social and

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<sup>563</sup> Chi-Hong Wang, 'Modern Machine: The National Taiwan Museum and the modernity of Taiwan's Enlightenment', in *National Taiwan Museum: Its Past and Future*, ed. Jong-Huang Hsiao (Taipei: National Taiwan Museum, 2008).

<sup>564</sup> "The introduction to the permanent exhibition," National 228 Memorial Museum, accessed August 30 2015, <http://museum.228.org.tw/info.aspx?v=A540A8FCBB420FA3>.

ethnic inclusion.<sup>565</sup>

In her study of the National Museum of Welsh Life and the shaping of Welsh identity, Rhiannon Mason suggests that the significance of displaying Wales in a national museum is not only to 'instruct citizens how to locate themselves in relation to the national story',<sup>566</sup> but also to tell the world about Wales.<sup>567</sup> For global museum studies and museum practices, the contributions of this study are threefold. Firstly, in studying a new national history museum, this study is the first to examine Taiwan's national museums from the research angle of *Bentuhua* and Taiwan's democratisation, which provides a clear picture of new and emerging situations in Taiwan during the past 20 years. In the case of the NMTH, Taiwan's unique national history and social contexts such as rapid democratisation, negotiation of ethnic relationships and the localisation of national identity are presented. All these new developments of Taiwanese society furnish contemporary Taiwan with a new and significant case study in dealing with the issue of identity politics in national museums.

Secondly, based on the principle of Taiwanese history that Taiwan is an international island in which different foreign forces arrived and subsequently departed, the collections, historical narratives and exhibitions of the NMTH extend beyond the geographical boundaries of Taiwan's Islands and connect to different countries in different periods. For example, the history of Dutch overseas expansion is also part of Taiwanese history, just as part of Japanese colonial history can be found in the historical narratives of the NMTH. In this sense, the source materials of constructing

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<sup>565</sup> Wu, 'Transitional Justice and Historical Memories'. Wu, 'Writing National Trauma'.

<sup>566</sup> Mason, 'Representing Wales', in Knell, *National Museums*, 247.

<sup>567</sup> *Ibid.*



national imagination in the NMTH not only derive from how ‘we’ imagined ourselves, but also from how ‘others’ imagined us. Narrating Taiwanese stories and displaying Taiwanese material culture within a global framework, the NMTH has been and continues to be a platform for the encounter of different cultures. As Simon Knell notes, ‘one of the contributions of national museums is to define and transcend geographical boundaries in complex and subtle ways’.<sup>568</sup> In this study, it is demonstrated that both Taiwanese history and the NMTH itself are dedicated to transcending the geographical boundaries of the nation in locating Taiwan on the world stage.

Lastly, in investigating the rise and the development of Taiwanese identity, this study contributes a special case to global museum studies through which to compare the process of how other Han societies, such as Hong Kong and Macao, establish the unique identity of Hong Kong, and display this in museums when facing the rise of China.<sup>569</sup> Their colonial experiences and post-colonist conditions mean that Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao face a common dilemma: to choose to identify with China, or develop a local identity which contributes to a national identity by emphasising each society’s specific historical experiences and opposition to the homogeneous national integration of Chinese nationalism.

In the case of Hong Kong, the Hong Kong identity emerged early in 1984 when facing the pressure of mainland power. This Hong Kong identity

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<sup>568</sup> Knell, ‘National museums and the national imagination’ in Knell and Arronsson, eds., *National Museums*, 23.

<sup>569</sup> Emily Stokes-Rees, ‘Recounting history: Constructing national narrative in the Hong Kong Museum of History’, in Knell and Arronsson, eds., *National Museums*, 339-354. Yu Hui-Ting and Lo Jin-Yi, ‘The two developments of nationalism in the period of the rise of China: The political differences of historical narratives between the Hong Kong Museum of History and the Macao Museum’, in *Building Identity: The Making of National Museums & Identity Politics* (Taipei: National Museum of History 2012), 143-158.

[...] reflects that of a territory which even under British rule had established itself as a world city while still retaining aspects of its indigenous culture, and it is this complex meeting of East and West, and of tradition and modernity, that has been uniquely packaged in the new Hong Kong Museum of History.<sup>570</sup>

The Hong Kong identity has been strong, while the Hong Kong people identify themselves as ‘Hong Kongers’ rather than as citizens of the People’s Republic of China.<sup>571</sup> It is this strong Hong Kong identity which has prompted the government of the People’s Republic of China to adjust the historical narratives of the Hong Kong Museum of History. By tracing Hong Kong’s history back to a Chinese historical context, the museum has acted as an agent in the service of political reality by seeking negotiation between Chinese identity and Hong Kong’s identity.<sup>572</sup>

In Macao, the situation is different. Before the transfer of the sovereignty of Macao from Portugal to the People’s Republic of China, the residents of Macao were mainly migrants from Mainland China. In contrast to Hong Kong, the main reasons for immigrants choosing to emigrate to Macao are economic factors, rather than the factor of political ideology in opposing the rule of the Chinese Communist Party. It is in this context that the local identity of Macao is weak, while anchoring the national identity of the Macao people within Chinese nationalism has never been the main concern of the government of the People’s Republic of China.<sup>573</sup> In this sense, unlike the Hong Kong Museum of History which has been slightly altered to display Chinese

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<sup>570</sup> Stokes-Rees, ‘Recounting history’, 341.

<sup>571</sup> *Ibid.*, 341.

<sup>572</sup> Yu and Lo, ‘The two developments of nationalism’, 146-147.

<sup>573</sup> *Ibid.*, 150.

nationalism, the Macao Museum is still able to maintain its narratives of defining Macao as the junction of Chinese and Western culture and has not been included in the framework of Chinese nationalism politically.<sup>574</sup>

Taiwan's situation is quite different from both Hong Kong and Macao. Under the long-term dominance of the Kuomintang's Chinese brand of nationalism, Taiwanese identity has been perceived as a local identity that was integrated into the grand narrative of Chinese nationalism. The findings of this study show that like Hong Kong, Taiwan also experienced the negotiation of two different identities in attempting to rebuild Taiwan as a Chinese nation state. However, owing to the naturally different constitutional institutions and specific circumstances of the People's Republic of China and the Republic of China, Taiwanese identity could be slowly cultivated in the context of *Bentuhua* policies and top-down political democratisation led by the *Bentuhua* Republic of China.

Unlike the political relationships and historical emotions between the People's Republic of China and Hong Kong or Macao, for Taiwan the Republic of China is naturally a settler state in which the Kuomintang political elites (settler group) enjoyed a more privileged status than *Benshengren* (native group).<sup>575</sup> As a settler state, as discussed in my research, in order to expand its political base and legitimate its rule in Taiwan, it was necessary for the government of the Republic of China to grant more political liberties to the native Taiwanese.<sup>576</sup> Although post-war political development is not in accordance with the nationalist principle – to build a nation state whose

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<sup>574</sup> *Ibid.*, 147-149.

<sup>575</sup> Wakabayashi, *The Taiwanisation of the Republic of China*, 101.

<sup>576</sup> Wang, 'Ethnic Consciousness, Nationalism and the support for Party'.

national boundaries (Taiwan) are consistent with its political boundaries (an independent Taiwanese nation state)<sup>577</sup> – the constitutional institution of the Republic of China actually provides a sphere in which different identities and nationalist ideologies can compete with each other. As this study concludes, in contemporary Taiwan, traditional Chinese nationalism has been, and continues to be, challenged and deconstructed. The building of the NMTH and the current appetite for displaying Taiwan in other national museums and local museums could be regarded as the victory of Taiwanese history in the ‘history war’ over the past four decades.

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<sup>577</sup> Hsiao, *Reconstructing Taiwan*, 49.

## Appendix 1.

### *List of Interview Questions for the Curators of the Research Division at the National Museum of Taiwan History*

1. The public roles and functions of the museum will change due to the changing of political, social, economic and cultural contexts. In this sense, do you think that the original functions and roles of the NMTH have been changed during the period from the preparatory phase until its opening to the public?
2. Taking the NMTH as an example, do you think the historical narratives of the Taiwanese present could guide the national imagination or the construction of a new community in the future?
3. Concerning the historical narrative of the permanent exhibition *Our Land, Our People*, do you think the historical narrative presented in the exhibition can be seen as the application of the new historical viewpoint of Taiwanese subjectivity which is used to replace the old China-centred history? Furthermore, do you think that the Taiwanese history displayed in *Our Land, Our People* can deal equally with the voices from each ethnic group, or is this merely another new singular master narrative?
4. As a ‘museum for people’, the NMTH has dedicated itself to collecting objects from people’s ordinary lives and constructing historical interpretations from the angles of personal memories and life experiences. On this basis, could you please talk about three minor questions: (1), how personal memories and oral history contribute to the historical narratives of the NMTH, (2), how memories and people’s ordinary life experiences combine with academic historical research in the museum’s research and exhibitions and (3), how individual personal identity can be transformed into a collective national identity via the museum’s historical narratives?

## Appendix 2.

### *List of Interview Questions for the Curators of the Exhibition Division at the National Museum of Taiwan History*

1. Please talk about the process of the exhibition design of *Our Land, Our People*. What learning and visiting experiences do you think that visitors can obtain from the exhibition?
2. Please talk about the relations between the exhibitions, people's memories and historical knowledge; that is, how the NMTH combines people's memories and historical contexts in the exhibitions?
3. Please talk about the relations between the permanent exhibition and the other special exhibitions of the NMTH.
4. In your opinion, are there any inadequacies in the exhibition content of *Our Land, Our People*? (For example, the deployment of each period or different historical memories of each ethnic group in the exhibition.) If there are any inadequacies, do you have any suggestions for amending the exhibition?

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