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Taiwan**

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# ***“IT’S OUR LAND”***

**A Critical Analysis of Development and Hegemony**

**Through the Eyes of the Truku of Taiwan**

Marc J. F. Jacquin, Hon.B.Soc.Sc.

M.A. Thesis presented to

Dr. Scott Simon, Ph.D.

Department of Sociology and Anthropology

University of Ottawa

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This compendium of stories and experiences represents only a small part of the lives of the people of Bsngan, Taiwan. If not for their patience, tolerance and care, I would not have had the opportunity to insert myself into their lives in an attempt to reflect their world. As this is my first attempt at providing a contribution to the world's knowledge, I humbly acknowledge my Truku family, friends and neighbours as the driving force behind this work. Not a day goes by that I am not reminded of these friends. If my work serves a useful purpose, it is due to their persistence, love of life and willingness to give of themselves for the betterment of others. In particular, I would like to thank Long Long, Tian Guay Fung, Pastor Kao, Issaw, Ili and Xue Wen.

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## **Introduction**

This thesis addresses the struggle between civilizations. Specifically, it will attempt to shed light on the manner in which the Truku people of eastern Taiwan perceive their world and experience their relations with non-indigenous Taiwanese culture. The study will focus on the loss and progressive regaining of land by the Truku since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. In order to establish dominance over the Truku, a series of colonial powers have unsuccessfully attempted to, at worst, extinguish and, at best, assimilate this indigenous society into their own by way of physical and discursive coercion. In most recent years, Taiwanese hegemonic ideology has focused on the economic development of this indigenous civilization. The Truku, however, are resisting this hegemony. Through bloody rebellion and peaceful political activism, they have succeeded in maintaining their identity and community, in spite of overwhelming odds. This thesis is thus a story of survival.

My observations, interviews and literature research with the Truku have served to help frame (and possibly answer) some of the research questions with which they struggle: How have the Truku experienced the loss of their land? How does land loss relate to hegemony in Taiwan? As a function of hegemony, what role does development discourse play in the lives of the Truku and how does it relate to their present situation? Finally, I will attempt to relate some of the solutions developed by the Truku to counteract present-day development projects.

To effectively address the issues raised above, the definition of relevant terms is required. 'Hegemony' is best associated with Italian thinker, Antonio Gramsci, who, in his manuscripts (1916-1936), describes this concept as an insidious strategy to motivate

people to voluntarily adopt certain habits or behaviours (Simon, 1991:22). In his analysis of Gramsci, R. Simon believes hegemony, more dangerous than the threat of physical force, fundamentally aims to organize popular consent to political and ideological leadership (Simon, 1991:22). A reading of Gramsci's work reveals how this 'leadership' tends to exist between two nations, towns or countries (Simon, 1991:22). Based on a Marxist tradition, hegemony is to be understood as relational, occurring between groups or classes, wherein one class attempts to cause a sort of 'passive revolution' in order to bring about intellectual and moral reform without attracting popular struggle from the peasantry and working class (Simon, 1991:23). In their interactions, Gramsci argues a bourgeoisie-controlled state, through coercion, attempts to centralize power which must be captured by the working class in order to bring about change. This may be achieved by developing hegemony within 'civil society', the social sphere between the state and the working class where social struggle and organized consent are formed (Simon, 1991:27).

Enter the Truku and contemporary Taiwanese society. By way of dominant development discourse, the Japanese, the Nationalist Kuomintang Party and the current Taiwanese administration have each sought to suppress, "civilize", "pacify", "modernize" and "develop" the Truku, despite persistent cries from this community to be left alone on their land to live in peace. In response to repeated attempts at establishing hegemony over them, the Truku have developed a strong culture of resistance, one that is observable in their hobbies, social organization, values and beliefs. This thesis seeks to elaborate on some of the important examples of cultural survival I observed during the summer months of 2005.

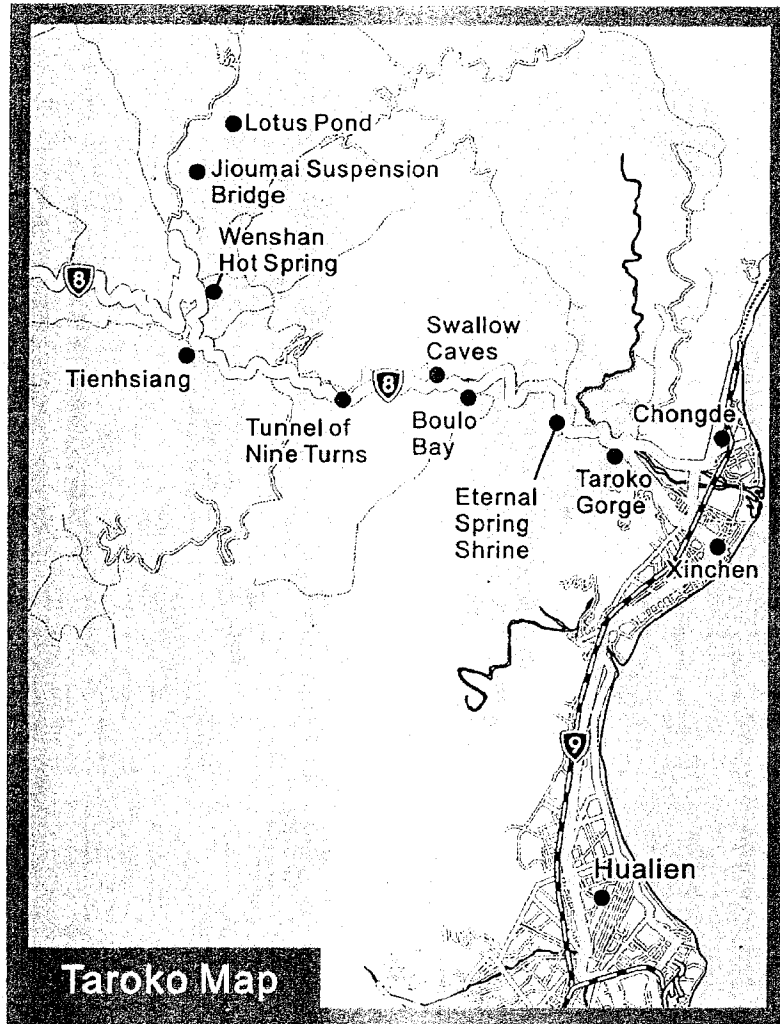
Arguably, the strongest attempt at ideological conversion of the Truku has been via the taking of their farming and hunting lands. Arturo Escobar's critique (1992) of development reveals it as a "hegemonic form of representation" of all non-Western space and cultures (Escobar, 1992:412). With regard to the Truku, "development" is described by Taiwanese mainstream society as a response to the presumed need for economic prosperity in this indigenous community (Simon, 2002). Development, a 'dream gone sour', has failed this indigenous society. As a discourse imparted upon the Truku by colonial forces, it has had significant effects on the Truku people, who, since their first contacts with non-indigenous societies, have managed to organize themselves to combat efforts to 'dominate, restructure and having authority over' them (Escobar, 1992:413).

By establishing a dominant 'discourse', the act of "producing ideologies" (Escobar, 1992:416) through hegemony, colonial powers have permitted themselves to define how the Truku are to be perceived and treated. This has served to justify cultural, spiritual, economic and military interventionism, the development of social stigmas, moral judgement and condemnation from many groups over many generations. In particular, recent modernization and environmental conservation theories have sought to play down the continued existence of the Truku in order to allow access to Truku land and resources. This thesis seeks to demonstrate how the Truku are continuously reconstructing a discursive composition of their own, one that puts their beliefs, identity(ies) and memories at the heart of their world view, in an effort to retake their land and autonomy.

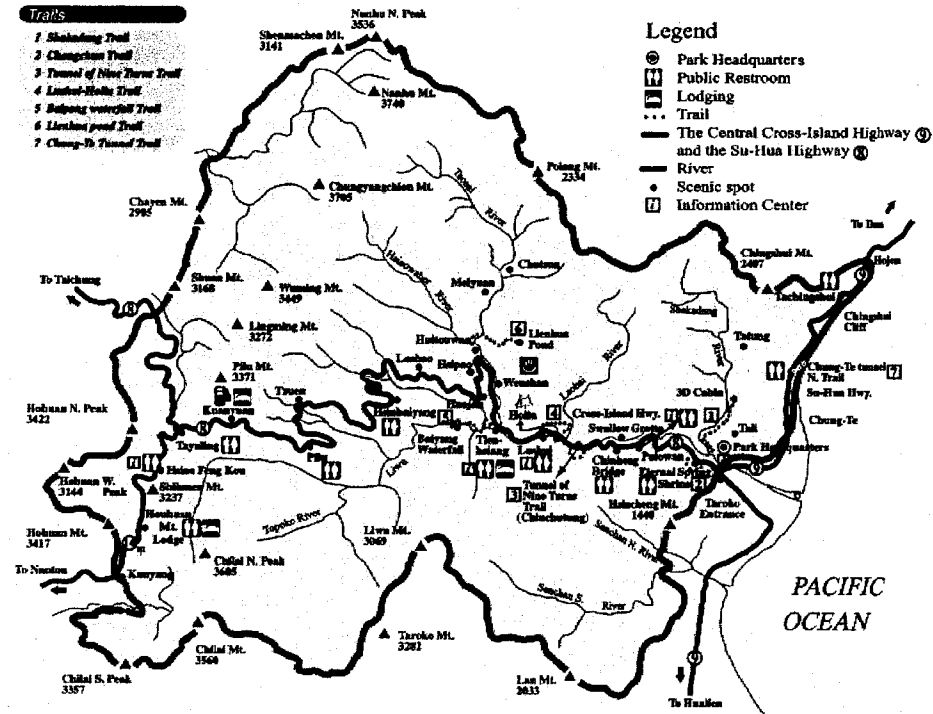
### **Employing an indigenous peoples' research and writing methodology**

As a precursor to this discussion, it is important to understand the logic behind the style and genre in which I have chosen to write this thesis. In an effort to reflect the recommended methodology of indigenous scholars like Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2002), I have attempted to represent parts of contemporary Truku life as I observed it. To transmit the knowledge, values and experiences of my friends and informants, I have chosen to limit long theoretical debates between First World writers in favour of a more journalistic, indigenous-centred storytelling style. I believe this style allows me to record and analyze the Truku perspective in a manner not easily achieved by classic thinkers.

This seemingly 'informal' genre offers a more direct appreciation for the social nuances that must be grasped to fully reveal the thin veil of institutionalized racism and belittling humour on the part of the non-indigenous. The, at times, literal retelling of episodes reflects the manner in which many Truku would, themselves, educate me on their lives and history. This can not always be accurately communicated in abstract sociological or anthropological argumentation. As a First World researcher, I was forced to adopt a methodology that, I hope, is classically Truku in nature. In order to render my research more acceptable to First World readers, I also acknowledge and respond to current debates in the field of indigeneity and development, but I hope to impart the fundamental requirement for indigenous researchers to challenge the very unspoken methodology they employed in their research.



Scale: 1cm = 10.1km



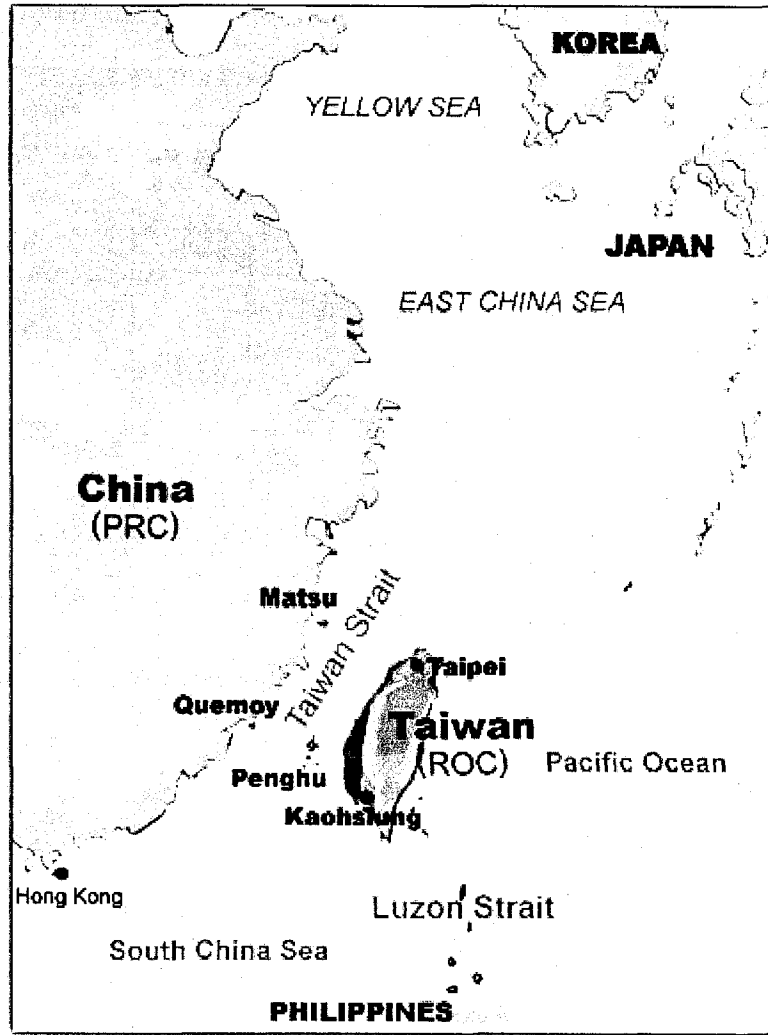
Tourist maps of Hualien county and the Taroko National Park, Taiwan (Source: Taroko National Park). Hegemony redefines our understanding of space to support the dominant discourse. These maps focus on the cross-island highway system, ignoring any existence of Truku settlements or even the current location of Bsgan.

## **Chapter 1: The Truku of Taiwan**

### **1.1 Description and brief history of the Truku**

In the past 150 years, the Truku nation has struggled to combat encroachment on their land and lifestyle, so much so that, for many, the struggle for sovereignty has become a focal point in the formation of their indigenous identity. Like other indigenous societies around the world (Bodley, 1999; Niezen, 2003), the Truku have faced peaceful and violent suppression of the rights. They have overcome the many 'civilizing' projects imparted on them by a variety of external administrations. More recently, they have resisted pressures to assimilate into mainstream Taiwanese culture. They continue to find ways of reaching into their history for meaning and purpose while embracing aspects of the dominant group. In short, the Truku are a people who have learned to successfully negotiate their place in the world in order to survive.

Since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Truku have endured a significant increase in contact with non-indigenous people (Nettleship, 1971). Prior to the Japanese colonial period (1895-1945), the Truku engaged in trading and border disputes with surrounding indigenous societies. Having garnered a reputation for their ferocity, the Truku became known for their tradition of headhunting. This practice mainly served two purposes. First, it provided a clear warning to surrounding groups not to infringe on their land. Second, it became a marker of a young man's ascension into adulthood (Rudolph, 1998). Rather than inflicting pain on others, Truku women endured painful facial tattoos in recognition of their mastery of weaving. Facial tattoos also served as markers of their allegiance to the Truku even if they married outside the nation.



Taiwan proper is located along the Tropic of Cancer (23 30 N, 121 00 E), between Japan and the Philippines

(Source: Government Information Office, Taiwan)

## 1.2 Japanese and Chinese Nationalist Colonial Influences

With the arrival of the Japanese, many habits and practices of the Truku were altered. The suppression of social norms became part of a Japanese strategy to bring indigenous societies under the rule of the modern nation-state of the Japanese empire. Arguably, this 'civilizing' project presented the greatest threat to the Truku because it required the centralization of multiple mountain hamlets into settled villages in the plains. During the previous colonial era (the Qing dynasty), administrators made no major

attempt to quell the Truku (Simon, 2006B). Mountain indigenous societies were simply divided by the Han population into “‘raw’ and ‘cooked’ barbarians” (Stainton, 1999; Ericsson, 2004), referring to their level of ‘civility’ (i.e. similarity to Chinese culture) according to the cooking methods adopted by each group and the head tax paid by the ‘cooked barbarians.’ Taking a different approach, the Japanese initiated contact with indigenous peoples by sending anthropologists and state officials to study the Truku, in order to gain access to valuable natural resources on their territory. Eventually, they pacified the rebellious Truku through the use of electric fences, military enclosure tactics and artillery bombing from land and sea.

Periods of violent resistance dot the ongoing struggle between the Truku and the Japanese. From 1910 to 1914, escalating military missions finally toppled the Truku resistance, one such period lasting 74 days despite intense attacks by the Japanese imperial army and navy. This is commonly known as the ‘Taroko Incident’, an event proudly noted by some Truku as a starting point for their ongoing resistance. After this event, the Japanese forced the Truku down from their homes to villages throughout what is now Hualien County. Many were situated along the Liwu River, currently located at the entrance of what is now known as the Taroko National Park. The only two exceptions were the hamlets of Skadang and Xoxos. The people of those villages were encouraged to stay on their mountain, now in the Taroko National Park, and practice agriculture there (Masaw 1977, 1978).

More importantly than attempted forced stoppages of headhunting and facial tattoos, it was the loss of land that has had the greatest impact on the lives of the Truku. The gradual relocation down the mountains took the Truku to Bsngan, the present day

conglomerate of mountain villages and central location for my research. In addition to hospitals, power plants, schools and state representation, the Japanese forced settled agriculture on this primarily hunter-gatherer society. In addition to conscripting Truku men as mountaineering troops in the imperial military effort, women and young girls were used as “comfort women” for the military (Blundell, 2000:158).

After 1914, the immediate shock of violent dispossession and forced assimilation lessened and life began to take a new shape for the Truku. Though many still hold a deep seeded hatred for the brutality of the Japanese occupation, which lasted until the late 1940s, some Truku are nostalgic for this era, particularly when comparing this era to the following period of Chinese Nationalist rule. Many Truku remain grateful for the ‘investments’ made by the Japanese in local infrastructure (Simon, 2006a).

### **1.3 The Politics of Naming – Truku, Taroko, Sediq?**

Despite the homogenizing perspective held by many outsiders, the Truku community in Bsngan is comprised of many historically different communities, hailing from different locations at the centre of Taiwan’s mountain range. Differences are felt between members of the different original communities who moved down from the mountains. In 2005, the *Taroko* tribe was officially recognized by the Executive Yuan. Though this group is presented by the state and mainstream media as a distinct and unified ethnic group, different from their former group, the Atayal tribe (a name given to them by Japanese anthropologists), closer analysis reveals divisions even within this group. Three subgroups can be identified within the Taroko. They include the Truku, Tkedaya and Teuda. Though many now identify themselves as Taroko, some (especially

in Nantou) believe the term *Sediq* is more appropriate than the name provided by the Executive Yuan Indigenous Peoples Council. In an effort to reflect the views of the people with whom I lived and work, I have chosen to comply with the name used by most people in Bsngan, that is to say *Truku*. Nearly all of the people in Bsngan, at any rate, are of the Truku subgroup.

As mentioned briefly above, several strategies were employed during the Japanese occupation, in order to pacify indigenous societies. Prior to any plan, the earliest groups (typically one or two households) settled voluntarily in 1879 in what is now known as Kele, on the east end of Bsngan (Masaw, 1977:129). These households originated from mountain communities known as Losao and Busuin. Early migration by mountain dwelling indigenous peoples occurred with little persuasion even into the early 1900s (Masaw, 1977). Between 1910 and 1914, indigenous communities began responding to the increased Japanese presence. No longer were anthropologists and government officials visiting only to discuss and learn from these communities.

Despite the Taroko Incident, the costly forced migration did not immediately become the focus of the Japanese agenda. In 1914, Kele was officially established by the Japanese. Though resistance continued in various hamlets, a plan was set out to encourage settlement of most mountain communities into the plains. Bsngan was chosen as one such location because of early settlement there and the assumption by the Japanese that these communities were somehow already linked, could comfortably live together in a single location and could be encouraged to take up agriculture on the flatter land of the valley at the mouth of the mountains. At this point, two locations were left alone by the Japanese. They were called Xoxos (loosely pronounced *Hohos*) and Skadang

(pronounced phonetically). In 1927, Lower Bsngan was established by the Japanese. This location is situated closest to the Liwu River and is constantly threatened with flooding during the rainy season. By 1937, more migrants were sent to Kele.

Xoxos and Skadang were said to have 14 families (or about 140 people) and 7 households (or about 62 people) respectively. This number has since dwindled, but families continue to farm the land in both communities. Masaw (1977) concludes the vast majority of migration, voluntary and forced, occurred within the twenty six year period following 1918 (a few years after the Taroko Incident).

In addition to military and economic change, religious organizations have also entered into the lives of the Truku in the past 150 years. In 2005, five churches were located in Bsngan (one Catholic, three Presbyterian and one True Jesus). Their effects on the Truku have been mixed, varying from complete changes in local beliefs to supporting Truku activism through the development of a written language while incorporating aspects of Truku spirituality in scripture (Stainton, 1999).

Development has become one of the main fields of struggle as the state tries to expand its hegemony over indigenous territory, whereas indigenous groups struggle to regain sovereignty over land that was taken from them under the Japanese and kept by the subsequent state powers. In the 1980s, the central government identified six areas in Taiwan to be designated as national parks, following an American concept of conservation. The Taroko National Park now 'protects' the land claimed by many Truku. This thesis will explore the relationship between the Truku and the National Park staff and their policies. The relationship with the county government will also be studied because it is they who have funded numerous 'development' projects in recent years.

#### **1.4 Lessons learned from a hike with Masaw<sup>1</sup>**

Though relatively short, a hiking trip I took with Masaw is among the most revealing and meaningful of my experiences in Bsngan, and should serve well to situate the reader. This trip marked, for me, an important entrance into the community. It provided me with an opportunity to demonstrate the respect I hold for the Truku, so that some members of the community may improve their perception of me and my reasons for living in Bsngan. The trip also allowed me to observe an example of the interaction between ‘developers’ and ‘developees’, as I was accompanied by local professors and graduate students as we climbed the hills to Skadang and Xoxos. Finally, the trip allowed me to see their mountain home with my own eyes, rather than relying on purely anecdotal information.

I realized how fortunate I was to have even been offered access to the two hamlets when I learned they were only rarely visited by those who do not live or control land there. Masaw, his wife, his brother and parents-in-law were among the few households who remain active on their land. I learned some families were starting to take their young back to see where their parents and grandparents lived prior to moving to Bsngan. I was told some of the elderly Truku had even requested to be transported up the hill via cable car so that they may pass away and be buried near their ancestors, as has been the tradition since time immemorial.

##### **1.4.1 Organizing the trip – Masaw’s concerns**

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<sup>1</sup> This, like the name of all individuals mentioned in this thesis, is a pseudonym.

Though I arrived in Bsngan in early May, 2005, I did not make the trip up the mountain until mid-June. For several weeks, Dr. Simon and I had been expressing our interest in joining a group up the mountain when we met those who told us they had just come down from their land. Eventually, I learned that Masaw had come to an agreement with two professors from a local university. They had informed Masaw that their graduate students would benefit from studying the potential benefits of developing an ecotourism industry with indigenous guides.

For Masaw, this would be his first real attempt at leading a larger group (consisting of seventeen students, their two professors, Dr. Simon and myself) up the hills to his home where he and his wife would prepare meals made from local flora and fauna and discuss the history of his community. Similarly to the Skadang River Protection Programme (see below), this ecotourism programme sought to help Masaw and his community reclaim their land and pressure the National Park and the county government to provide them with a maintained road up to their homes, an asset for which he and others have fought since many moved down to Bsngan in the 1980s.

With little information on how to dress or prepare, Dr. Simon and I presented ourselves at the National Park headquarters on the morning of the trip. Dressed in gumboots, jeans, a T-shirt and red baseball hat, Masaw greeted us pleasantly. He seemed a bit nervous. I would later learn Masaw was deaf out of one ear and sometimes had difficulty conversing in large groups. This contributed to his warm demeanour, as he often stood close to those with whom he spoke, sometimes placing his hand on their shoulder.

Knowing to pack light, I brought only enough to fit in a very small shoulder bag. This decision served me well in the late hours of the hike. If the other members of the group were informed that too much equipment was unnecessary and detrimental, they did not heed the warning. I was astounded at the size and weight of the backpacks brought by many of the students and one of the professors. Compared to Masaw's relatively simple, modest outfit, the students seemed markedly over-equipped. For the two day trip, students had gone to specialized "outdoor adventure" stores to purchase the latest in waterproof jackets, titanium hiking poles and expedition backpacks. In my subsequent conversations and eavesdropping, I learned many had never been hiking and had little knowledge of 'nature'. This would be abundantly evident as our trek progressed.

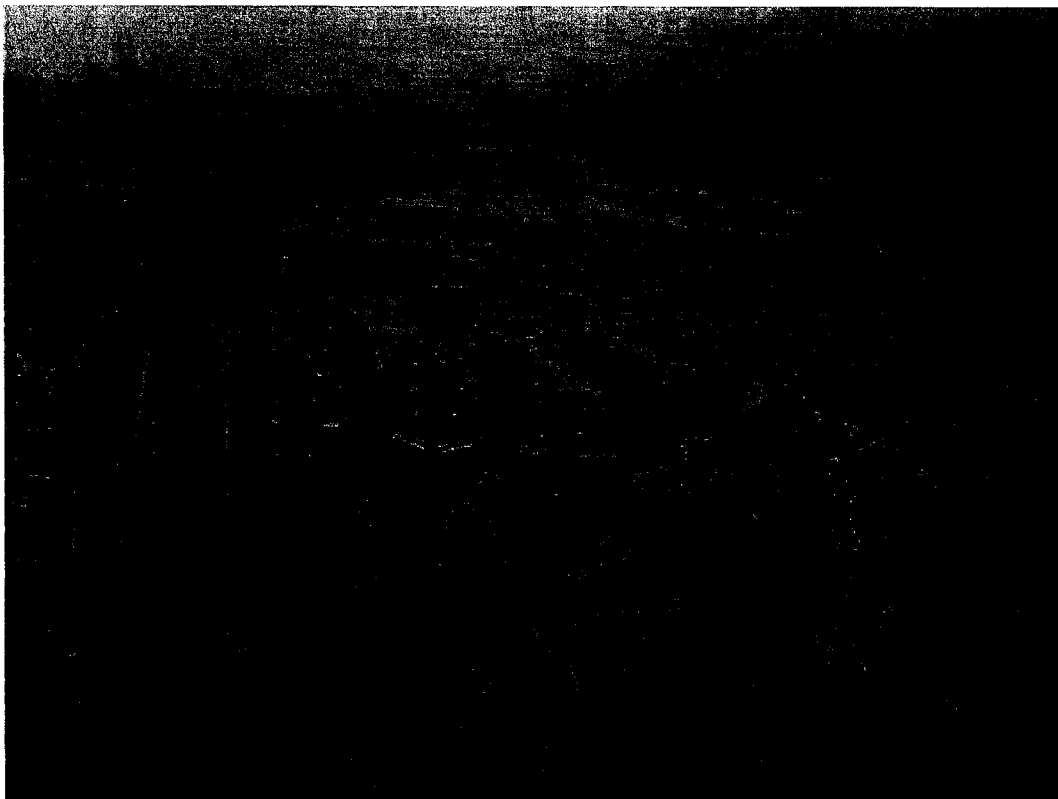
I observed many differences in the ways Masaw and the students perceived the hike. These differences speak to Gramsci's discussion on culture. In his early writings, Gramsci challenges the idea of culture as bounded or autonomous from the human experience (Gramsci, in Crehan, 2002:74). Gramsci argues culture is not to be used as a tool to segregate people. It is not meant to be limited to exercises of the intellect or displays of worldly knowledge, as the students might have suggested. Rather, he argues culture is the process of knowing oneself, 'a coming to terms with one's own personality' (Crehan, 2002:74).

By becoming cultured, Gramsci adds that rights and obligations become apparent to individuals, as they become increasingly aware of their relations with those around them and their place in history. I believe, by showing his land and telling his story, Masaw hoped to impart on the students a sense of where he believed their place in history might be. As students of eco-tourism and sustainable development, Masaw sought their

support and advice, as supporters of his cause and project. This was, for him, to be a potentially vital cultural exchange, wherein his guests would leave with a greater awareness of the change they could bring about in their own work.

#### **1.4.2 A controversial Truku exhibit**

Once we had all assembled, Masaw and the professors had contacted an ethnic Taiwanese employee of the National Park who had just completed an exhibit on the forced relocation of the Truku by the Japanese. Awi took us through the photos, objects and maps he had collected in order to explain the great lengths required by the Japanese to suppress the Truku resistance, which persisted successfully for several decades in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.



As Awi took the group around discussing his findings, questions arose concerning the existence of and positions taken by the exhibit. Awi seemed uneasy and lowered his voice as he talked about the challenges he had weathered from coworkers and superiors at the National Park. Our group was visiting on the first day of public viewing. A few days earlier, the National Park supervisor passed through the area, stopping on a final placard. It mentioned the Truku were not yet capable of returning to their land. This, explained Awi, very much upset the supervisor, who demanded the placard be removed citing its potential for inciting 'ethnic conflict'. The supervisor was clearly concerned the public could make a link between the Japanese occupation and the current Park administration with regard to the suppression of Truku land rights. In response, Awi threatened to take down the entire exhibit if she did not let him leave up this important message. After intense discussions, Awi won his right to leave up everything.

As we toured the displays, Awi told the story of the violent and non-violent methods of pacification of the Truku (then *Atayal*) by more than 30,000 Japanese troops. He explained how sections of the Taroko Gorge were blown out with dynamite to build roads to permit artillery units to climb to high altitude locations from which they could bomb resistant villages from above. We learned about the ever-shrinking electric fenced zones constructed by the Japanese, used to contain those communities who would not negotiate with them. This isolation technique effectively cut them off from other communities and precious hunting land.

In curious contrast to these stories of violent episodes of ethnic division, our group was also shown a short 'documentary' about the mountain area, created by the National Park. Therein, almost no mention was made of the Truku, short of a few sentences alluding to their virtual disappearance, their 'ancient traditions' and their love of weaving.

Once our visit to the headquarters had ended, we met outside, where more students had arrived late, heavy and burdensome camping equipment in hand. The group of students laughed among themselves as Masaw attempted to discuss the dangers of where we would be climbing. We walked a few hundred metres to a cable car that would take our bags to a halfway point up the hill. Despite Masaw's seriously worded recommendation to put everything on the platform to go up, some students insisted on carrying their bags, claiming they wanted the practice for future 'expeditions'. I could not tell whether they were merely untrusting of Masaw's judgement or completely unaware of the challenging climb that awaited us. I would later find both statements to be true.

Having received little information regarding our trip, I had envisioned a walk along a gravel or dirt path. It was not until Masaw pointed to the steep face of the mountain that I better understood the nature of our 'hike'. Rather than walking along the manicured paths of the National Park, we were to follow the *hunter's* path, which consisted of a steep, semi-constructed, winding staircase of stones, vines and logs. I was, at first, sceptical as to why we would not take an easier route. I later learned this manner of ascent allowed indigenous hunters both a quicker trip to and from their homes and a manner of travel that permitted them to avoid park police, should they have enjoyed a

successful hunt and were returning with a deer or flying squirrel. As will be explained, hunting is an illegal act as declared by the National Park administration.

As we climbed, Masaw stopped at various locations to show us piles of stones, some set in circular formations. These were typically located on ledges or flatter areas of the hill face. We were told this is where a family once lived and where their ancestors now 'slept'.<sup>2</sup> Masaw was very protective and respectful of these areas, telling us repeatedly not to get close and not to laugh or make too much noise. The group was mildly compliant with Masaw's request, some continuing to laugh with each other as they climbed past these sacred sites. They did not seem to show the same reverence for Masaw's ancestors as he did.

It is possible the students regarded the Truku understanding of ancestry as folklore, something not within their academic realm, and thus not seem relevant or worth comprehending. Gramsci addresses the role of 'folklore' in the hegemonic project. He essentially viewed 'folklore' as a romanticized label attached to lower status peoples' living habits: "Folklore was often celebrated by those who collected and studied it as an expression of the spirit of 'the people'," (Crehan, 2002: 106).

By the time we had arrived at the midway point and had gathered our bags, the students, clearly not accustomed physical activity, could take no more. Some had requested to stop along the climb so they could catch their breath and smoke a cigarette. Others wanted to take pictures of the scenery. Masaw seemed frustrated with the slow pace. He had mentioned the inherent danger presented by the constant rain, noting the

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<sup>2</sup> In the past, Truku people buried their dead underneath their homes. This practice persisted until the KMT-sponsored "Measures to Improve Lives" campaign of 1951 (Rudolph 1993: 23).

path may not be easy to find if it is washed away, as it has in the past. Though assuring us he would stop at appropriate, safer locations, the students often stopped climbing and sat precariously on stones and wet logs, despite the danger. As an outside observer, I remember feeling frustrated for Masaw. Despite his knowledge of the area and its history, he had not gained the students' respect. Though the stated purpose of their trip was to apply Masaw's knowledge to a model of profitable ecotourism, I found little advice seemed to flow from the group.

At the halfway point, Masaw's brother joined our group. One of the students who had carried up a very large backpack finally began complaining about pain in his knees. The bag was the size of his torso and the young man clearly had been struggling with it 10 minutes into the 4 hour climb. Masaw patiently assisted him by asking his brother, one of the fellows who had offloaded our equipment from the cable car, to share the load. The student sheepishly accepted and handed off his sack to the smaller, older man. We learned that evening that the bag contained a massive watermelon, a cake and plates for a birthday party he had planned for one of his teachers.

Near our destination, Masaw stopped the group to discuss the relationship between the Truku hunters and the National Park police. He pointed to a bare wooden stake planted along a beaten path we had been following for the last leg of the hike. Masaw said this is normally a sign posted by the police, indicating the path was closed and prohibited from use. He said every time a hunter sees the sign up, he will remove it, only to see a new one appear a few weeks or months later. 'It's like a game', he said, smiling wryly. Masaw was eager to tell us of his encounters with the park police and how they were unable to stop the Truku from hunting.

As we arrived at the farmhouse belonging to Masaw and his family, one could see cleared, grassy land all around, with another small house situated about 100 metres away. From the burned-out fields, we could see that they had been recently practicing slash-and-burn agriculture. Short of the two homes built on top of small hills, everything else was sloped, including the vegetable crops. The area was located in a small valley surrounded by hills that continued up into the clouds. Inside the farmhouse was an open space with raised platforms for sleeping and storage, as well as a kitchen with a propane stove and fireplace. At the centre of the common area sat a television with satellite access.

At supper, Masaw's wife began cooking vegetables grown on their land, as well as dishes containing typical purple sweet potato. The centrepiece of the meal was a spicy flying squirrel. The students laughed nervously and vocalized their displeasure at the pungent smell of the boiled animal. In the end, only Dr. Simon and I tried any part of the dish. Though the animal provided enough meat for the whole group and we were all tired and hungry from the hike, almost none of the guests seemed interested in tasting the meal that had so carefully been prepared. Though I could not detect whether Masaw had taken offence or was hurt by the close-mindedness of the visitors, there were other moments when he clearly expressed his annoyance and frustration with the behaviour of the group.



Dr. Simon contemplates Masaw's farm land, staggered garden and farmhouse in Xoxos (June, 2005)

By not listening to Masaw's short explanations and laughing among themselves, a clear message of disrespect and disinterest was received by Masaw. I believe he had genuinely hoped to receive constructive feedback from a group of 'experts'. He had hoped these people would analyze his ideas for an ecotourism business and provide constructive suggestions. Instead, I believe he felt like he was babysitting children who could not appreciate what he was trying to show them. Rather than staying an additional night, Masaw felt it best to cut our three day trip down to two days. I believe he understood these Taiwanese academics were more interested in getting their new GPS devices to work than learn about high altitude farming or indigenous hunting techniques. His understanding of their disrespect was surely formed also by a lifetime of experiencing Han racism or chauvinism toward indigenous peoples (see Rudolph 1993: 70-75).

Contrary to Masaw's expectations, the students and professors had agreed to visit Skadang and Xoxos in a different mindset. Their concerns revolved around their professional and social needs. While the professors may have seen some value in exposing their students to 'real world' applications of their studies, the students simply wanted a few days away from their studies. No one in the group seemed to have invested more of their time, thought and energy as Masaw, whom I believe was hoping for a much more focused study of his idea for ecologically and culturally sustainable business. Rather than seeking to make a profit from the trip, we were charged only for the cost of the food and use of the cable car. This, for Masaw, was to be the beginning of a long term project, a test for an idea that would allow him and his family to maintain the life previous generations had enjoyed and also fought to keep.

On perhaps only a superficial level, the contrasting objectives and social logics may serve to exemplify the ongoing disconnect between indigenous peoples and the non-indigenous majority population.

In a small but meaningful way, Masaw's attempt to expose the students to his way of life speaks to Gramsci's discussion on the creation of new cultures within the existing social reality. Rather than presenting Truku life as a new discovery to his guests, Masaw discussed the history of his people and their land in a manner that communicated that they have always existed. Rather than relating random bits of information relating to the Truku, Masaw discussed their relationship with the outside world, so as to demonstrate their relational history, leading to their present circumstance.

Gramsci supports this view of culture, arguing it is not sufficient for a great thinker to 'discover' the existence of a new culture. This idea must be diffused through the population and rendered self-evident through socialization.

The return trip was even more treacherous than the climb up. Due to overnight rain and an oncoming storm, Masaw took us to visit the second hamlet, Skadang, before carving us a path through the bush, downhill toward the Skadang River and ultimately Bsngan. Without stones to brace ourselves, our group slipped and slide down wet mud, dodging trees as we went. One of the professors, who had purchased expensive, 'high technology', water-resistant hiking shoes, found them to be no match in the mud for Masaw's simple, knee-high rubber rain boots.

As the students slipped and narrowly missed crashing into trees, stones and each other, Masaw often looked back and shook his head in frustration. They laughed blithely as they trudged through the forest, at times getting lost because they had lagged so far behind us as a result of someone stopping to see a caterpillar. Laughing among the Truku can sometimes be perceived as a form of mocking. It is particularly irreverent in areas occupied by deceased ancestors, like the hills we were visiting.

I believe this experience taught Masaw a lot about his business idea. He learned that only a very specialized type of tourist would appreciate what he wanted to offer them. If he was going to show his childhood home to the world and share part of his peoples' way of life, it would need to be done with individuals who were seeking it out, rather than tourists who want a mere walk in a park. It would be premature and unfair of me to draw conclusions about the lack of concern I believe many Taiwanese feel for

indigenous peoples' cultures, based solely on my observations of the interaction between Masaw, his family and the visiting students. I will say, however, that I could see the disappointment on Masaw's face as we ate supper that evening. I felt his frustration at the lack of interest shown by his guests. I observed how his wife supported and encouraged him in this venture. She fought equally hard for her right to live on their land and maintain their way of life.

Indigenous peoples' movements to take back their land continue to grow and have known significant successes in recent years (Singh and Singh, 2004: 43). By valuing indigenous knowledge and upholding a policy of 'home rule' to local communities, there is hope that communities like the Truku will eventually regain what was taken from them. Key to past and future successes is the self-motivated initiatives of indigenous peoples to reclaim and control access to their land. Often in the public eye, taking responsibility for the protection of the land is, in effect, laying claim to it. It is a statement of genuine concern and rightful ownership. Unlike external groups, the Truku can demonstrate a long history of successful stewardship over the land. This supports the personal sense of duty and belonging to the land, shared by so many Truku. This is something that cannot be replaced by regulations and policies conceived by a government committee.

If several models of indigenous community-led environmental conservation schemes exist, why has ecotourism become such a popular choice? Singh and Singh (2004) believe this type of scenario works successfully (meaning it empowers indigenous peoples while protecting the physical environment) because it is first and foremost a form of business rooted in the grassroots democracy (Singh & Singh, 2004:54). The authors

warn against other activities that are harmful to the environment, like heli-skiing and white-water rafting. These businesses tend not to be controlled by local indigenous communities, but claim to offer similar experiences. They brand themselves in a similar fashion to sell to tourists seeking ecologically sensitive vacation experience, though the business operators show little real regard for conservation.

In contrast, one can hardly argue Masaw does not hold a deeply vested interest in preserving and protecting *his* land from the potentially destructive outcomes of mass tourism and unenforceable park regulations. To him, the mountains are not merely a commodity for sale, nor are they a romanticized locale that needs to be fenced in or left untouched. It is where his ancestors lived and where his parents died (his father was accidentally killed on the mountain). It is where his children will likely gain their own sense of belonging, purpose and duty to those around them.

To invite outsiders onto this land is to include them in his world. In order to this, Masaw must persuade the Taiwanese government that he, indeed, is the rightful owner of the land, as there is no one in the world better qualified to nurture and care for it as the Truku have since the dawn of their existence.

After hiking with Masaw and his wife and observing their knowledge and care for guests and the environment, I must challenge Singh & Singh, who, in their analysis of the virtues of ecotourism, argue that “well-planned ecotourism” requires:

“[a] biological and socio-economic database, involving conservation-minded stakeholder groups drawn from public and private sectors, non-governmental organizations, professionals, tourism guilds, representative of indigenous, cultures, regional people and local communities, can provide answers to these puzzling questions”. (Singh & Singh, 2004:54)

I am of the view that Masaw and his family possess all the knowledge required to run a subsistence based business. Due to the relatively small size of the groups, they will not require large marketing campaigns. On the contrary, they understand it would not be in their interest to allow too many people to reach their home, as it could harm their land and potentially monopolize their time.

Surely, if Masaw and other Truku decided to redirect their work in hopes of commercial success, outside institutions may become necessary in order to allow them to capture a wider audience. This thinking, however, would not seem to me to be consistent with the life so many Truku have sought for themselves. This is not to suggest all Truku would turn down the opportunity to live in a more capitalist fashion, given the chance. I merely offer the argument that, given the history of the Truku and the present socio-economic and political location most occupy in Taiwan, I believe it would be highly unlikely that they would actively change their life habits to suit a new way of thinking and behaving, simply to make more money.

Rather, I believe it to be more likely that individual Truku and their households have chosen to renegotiate their place in a broader Taiwanese society. Since the increased exposure to non-Truku culture, they have been forced to look at what they value and what it means to be Truku, in order to protect and/or surrender areas of their cultural, spiritual and physical identities. In 2005, people like Masaw have taken the battle back to land rights, using tactics like the River Protection programme and the ecotourism business to regain their property (see below). These strategies represent, in effect, the contemporary version of the headhunting practices of old. This may seem like an exaggeration to some,

but both strategies are used to maintain control over land while setting limits on who can access it.

## **Chapter 2 - Development and competing social logics in Bsngan**

In order to understand how the Truku experience development, it is important to understand their perceptions of economic activities. Business, labour and wealth among the Truku resemble that which has been observed in many other indigenous societies. The dominant discourse of Truku and other indigenous economic behaviour in Taiwan blames poverty on the “laziness” of indigenous people, as well as the “fact” that labourers are ‘unskilled’ and depend heavily on government handouts in order to get through life. In addition to the state’s self-described ‘best efforts’ to curb poverty, indigenous peoples are publicly portrayed as a collective of dependents who show no interest in long term solutions. In response, the state claims to create projects that serve to teach the Truku to start businesses and ‘gain confidence’ in order to reach the prescribed goal of financial success. Like other contexts with the same discourse of “development,” this discourse places the burden of success or failure on the local people, shifting attention away from the state and society as factors that caused their poverty (Kamat 2002: 92).

From the perspective of the Truku, the story looks quite different. Disapproving shakes of the head and scowls often accompanied the descriptions I heard of non-indigenous Taiwanese by some Truku. “All they do is work, work, work. They are not happy; not as happy as us.” The most telling moments of my experience in Bsngan occurred under the circumstances in which indigenous and non-indigenous people interacted. This chapter will discuss some manifestations and trends that can be taken from these interactions. In particular, I focus on an ecological co-management project in the Taroko National Park and a state-sponsored pottery class. In both scenarios, it is

evident that the Truku and non-indigenous ‘development experts’ enter into these exchanges with very different perceptions, demands and expected outcomes.

In the first case, adult indigenous students are compensated by the ROC Executive Yuan Council of Labour Affairs (CLA) to participate in a pottery class in order to gain skills they may use to gain further income. In the second case, the Taroko National Park partners with a local community association to protect the flora and fauna along the Skadang River which flows down from the surrounding mountains. As we will see, the disconnect that exists between the two groups become clearly defined, forcing those working in the middle to carefully negotiate between competing interests in order to give the allure of mutually agreeable outcomes.

Olivier de Sardan (2005) offers an important examination of the ‘development projects’ mentioned above, which he describes as “the most widespread and the most conspicuous type of development structure,” (Olivier de Sardan, 2005:137). He proposes that development projects suffer from a series of inherent flaws in their design, goals and expectations, resulting in, at best, only very limited benefit to the ‘target population’. Furthermore, as importantly as the methods used to ‘raise’ the quality of life of indigenous peoples, Olivier de Sardan argues it is the *interaction* between the contrasting worlds that must be examined in order to understand the respective logics that dictate behaviour among each player. These different worlds tend to separate development ‘experts’ (i.e. technical advisors, banking groups, commercial and agricultural services) from indigenous peoples, wherein each world functions based on their particular interests, objectives and values. Between these worlds are ‘brokers’, people who share aspects of both worlds’ logics and who negotiated between contrasting interests.

In Bsngan, this general interaction is clearly apparent. Attempts at development include initiatives from the county government, the CLA and the National Park. I observed a number of sessions funded by the CLA. The stated purpose of the classes, from the county government's perspective, was to teach indigenous women to manufacture and sell hand-made items from pottery. This goal and corresponding interests are, according to Olivier de Sardan, the result of a social 'strategic logic' held by each actor, that is to say a homogenizing typology of "understandings put into practice" (Olivier de Sardan, 2005:138). In essence, these logics create the resulting actions taken by 'developers' and 'developees' in their navigation through the development process.

Also at play in the interaction between competing strategic logics are the varied environmental factors (political, economic, moral, institutional, etc.) that often impact heavily on the reactions, interpretations and motivations of actors. Moreover, the community in which developers establish themselves most likely will have a social memory of politico-economic interventionism (Olivier de Sardan, 2005, 139). In Bsngan, this memory would most likely come from the community's varied experiences under fifty years of Japanese rule and a subsequent sixty years under the Republic of China. Many among the Truku could also speak to the changes that occurred in government relations, housing and social policy during the transitional phases between the Japanese and the Chinese Nationalist Party in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. Olivier de Sardan is heavily critical of the "development enterprise", arguing it functions under its own "modes of organization and labour, under specific constraints" (Olivier de Sardan, 2005:137).

Based on my observations in Bsngan, I can offer relevant qualitative data to support Olivier de Sardan's position. The pottery class consisted of a nine week

workshop organized by the Council for Labour Affairs. It was taught by a professional indigenous artist and teacher in Cyakang, another Truku village located in relatively close driving proximity to Bsngan. The vast majority of students (27 of 29) were women in their twenties, thirties and forties. Two men who participated were physically challenged; one man was limited in the use of his legs while the other (the teacher's brother) was restricted in his vision. One of the first things I noticed about the course was that it was offered in teacher's workshop about one hour's drive from Bsngan. Students living in villages other than Cyakang had to access cars or scooters to get to class. Though this is probably not an insurmountable obstacle for many, it may have restricted participation to those who could secure transport. On a fairly simple level, this illustrates how development project can ignore certain realities for the 'developees' and may impact how they respond to these projects. Students received NT\$9,500.00 (roughly \$336.00CND) per month for participating in the class.



A Truku man participates in a county government-sponsored pottery class (June, 2005)

The development project nearly failed to commence after Ukan (the “broker” who had secured funding for it through his NGO) learned the original teacher was suddenly fired from the project because she had accepted several contracts to teach in different locations in Taiwan at the same time. I learned this was not the first time the woman had sent other instructors in her place so that she could profit from multiple lucrative government contracts at once. This form of ‘subcontracting’ was not permissible under her agreement with the state, though it created employment for several more teachers.

### **2.1 The Importance and ‘Sidetracking’ of Public Coherence**

Olivier de Sardan notes throughout his work that the development world is highly competitive. Projects must therefore claim to be coherent enough in their work and goals to justify their existence and gain access to funding. This claim of coherence is often

required as a condition of funding. Often, however, the claim of coherence is severely jeopardized even prior to arriving in a community. Olivier de Sardan finds four levels of compatibility that may contradict each other and sidetrack the project if they are not taken into consideration:

- a) “the internal coherence of the technical model;
- b) the compatibility of the project with the national economic policy;
- c) the conformity of the project with donors’ norms;
- d) the internal dynamic of the project itself.” (Olivier de Sardan, 2005:141)

These areas of required compatibility are too often overlooked or ignored completely, resulting in the ‘sidetracking’ of a project. This derailment or ‘dismemberment’ of the goals and outcomes of development is evidenced in the relations between the Truku and the pottery class project I observed. Unaware and/or uninterested in environmental factors, Olivier de Sardan argues development projects are doomed to severe alteration in form and function as they leave theory and are put into practice. While I did not gain access to the official description of the pottery class, I was told one of the goals was to give students the skills necessary to create crafts that could be sold to tourists at a fair price. One aspect that seemed to be negated in the process was a marketing strategy to promote the sale of these special products. In terms of long-term sustainability, little thought seemed to be put into the pottery program.

In order to understand how the reactions of the various parties may cause a project to sidetrack, we can examine what is missed in the focus of their respective logics. Olivier de Sardan takes agronomic logic as his example, noting the institutes that adhere to this logic typically overlook the ‘non-technical’ aspects that are continuously faced by agricultural producers in the field. This may include minimizing inputs when funding is

low or measuring a season's productivity according to moments of insufficient rainfall rather than average rainfall, the latter being the choice of agronomic researchers.

With regard to the indigenous pottery students, I too had high hopes they might all become professional artists. Their enthusiasm for the class and skill in the works they produced convinced me they would take these skills into a professional career. I would later learn the vast majority of the students simply returned to their respective lives, not because they 'lacked initiative' or skill, but because they had made enough money from the pay offered at the class to cover their subsistence expenses for a few more weeks. For them, these classes represented a way to spend time with friends, learn something new and make some money to support their families. At no time do I remember hearing anyone talk about starting their own studio or getting funding to buy more supplies. Since none of the students had made any promises of applying their experience to start a business of their own, it seems unfair to assume they can be faulted if they chose not to venture into this field of work upon completion of the pottery class.

From a Western, capitalist perspective, this is a totally illogical position. These people would be accused of 'abusing the system', of 'slacking off' or being dishonest in their intentions. From indigenous peoples' perspectives, the state was offering them an opportunity to earn money. They had never agreed to enter into business as a result of taking this class: this was an assumption based on Taiwanese mainstream business logic, a logic that is not adopted by the subsistence logic of the Truku.

For the Truku, participation in development projects serves as an additional resource for subsistence living. It was never conceived as anything else. In essence, the Truku have found methods and practices that help to maintain their way of life even after

being coerced out of their homes in the mountains. There, they hunted and farmed for the purposes of survival rather than profit. After coming down to the Bsngan, where business prospects are scant and cultural barriers make successful entrepreneurship very difficult, the Truku have sought out ways to survive as they have for so many years prior: they gather only what they need. The rest is shared within a household or church community. To take more than one needs is to withhold it from someone who may need it more. Among the Truku, I found this behaviour was perceived as hoarding, anti-social and greedy.

This observation was made clearer for me during a conversation in an indigenous-owned and operated café situated in Hualien. There I spoke with a Truku woman who was well acquainted with the practice of hunting. She mentioned how secretive hunters often needed when they returned from successful hunt. ‘They had to be mindful of the police?’ I asked. ‘No,’ she said, smiling, ‘we had to be careful of the other people in the area! We would hide the *bada* [muntjac] in the house, lock the doors and cut it up as quickly as we could, so the best parts could be kept before others came by to collect a portion for themselves. Otherwise we would get very little.’ The idea of not sharing the meat clearly seemed inconceivable and highly inappropriate to her.

When state intervention is added to this equation of life, most Truku merely see it as another means of survival, a fortunate opportunity to make art, laugh with friends and keep on living, thanks to the income generated for their attendance to class.

## **2.2 The Politics of Competing Project Outcomes**

Olivier de Sardan pursues this argument with an important second point: the end result of development projects offer vastly differing outcomes for 'developers' and 'developees'. From the developer's perspective, the project goals may be to reduce poverty and dependency on bank loans while increasing the gross national product and contributing capital and income to a wider economy. This differs starkly from the developee, who must look for a means of immediate survival, rather than wait for data to analyse at the end of the season. She/he does not have time to care about their contribution to the GNP because this serves no real purpose in subsistence logic. In addition, the risks faced by each group is very different: If a project 'fails', as one could say the pottery class did, the developer stands to suffer far less than the developee, who remains in the original situation of poverty. Fortunately for the Truku, few suffered as a result of the end of the pottery class, as many students had access to other funds and sources of income through their families.

On some level, I believe the Truku understand development projects (like the Skadang River Protection Programme and the pottery class) were never meant to produce long-lasting results, and they accept this. They understand state officials do not have the same level of interest in the success of any of these initiatives. Once the project is launched, the county government is not held accountable and will suffer no ill effects if the programme produces little to no sustainable economic activity. By the same token, the county government may believe they are incapable of 'helping' indigenous peoples but remain constrained to create and promote development projects because it is the mandate of their office to do so. Time after time, they create programmes that do not seem to attract participation unless financial compensation is offered to students. If a

mechanism exists to track the outcomes of these programmes, the results are dismal because no jobs or businesses are created.

In essence, both sides enter into the development project with starkly differing expectations and goals, leading to life as usual for the Truku and the satisfaction by the Council of Labour Affairs at their attempt to provide skills to the unemployed.

Ironically, it was at a meeting called by Ukan to pitch his new idea for an internet marketing project for Taiwanese indigenous art that I heard an idea for a simple, inexpensive and sustainable project designed and demanded by the indigenous artists present. "Let us go into the forest to collect fallen wooden, after storms," someone said to Dr. Simon during a brief focused discussion. "They say it's too dangerous because people die when they try to get wood from the rivers, but those people [non indigenous peoples] don't know what they're doing." Rather than seeking funding for classes or devising elaborate programmes, these artists simply demanded their right to access dead fallen wood that could be dried, carved and bent to make unique chairs or mounted as art. I had seen these pieces before, for sale as one-of-a-kind artistic furniture. Some of Ukan's outdoor furniture was made from this type of wood.

In effect, these artists were complaining about their lack of sovereignty over land and rivers their people had controlled and maintained for generations. By returning power over these resources, Truku artists, hunters, farmers and their families would regain a vital part of their life and culture. I remain astounded at the clarity and unanimity that followed this demand. Within twenty minutes of discussion, a small but knowledgeable group of indigenous people described a viable, inexpensive project idea that has been repeatedly ignored by the Taiwanese government for decades.

If the county government had taken on this idea as a development project, it is conceivable that 'experts' and consultants would likely be contracted to teach indigenous artists how to extract the wood 'properly'. Classes would be created to show members of the community (who have little or no interest in starting a business) how to carve the wood and sell their works. These students would be paid for the time they spend in class, only to leave at the end, having thoroughly enjoyed their experience, never to take up wood carving again. This hypothetical scenario mimics what I have observed and is supported by the countless programmes started by the county government in Bsngan.

### **2.3 Dismembering Development Projects**

Olivier de Sardan recommends two principles ('selection' and 'side-tracking') to help us understand some of the most common behaviours exhibited by groups 'for whom' projects are developed and applied. Despite the well structured, integrated frameworks that are put into place when creating a development project, local groups ultimately hold the power to take and leave aspects of the programme which suit their agenda and way of life. Based on their strategic logics, a 'target population' will accept some, rarely all, of the structures, processes and resource that make up the 'package' that is the development project.

As an example, Olivier de Sardan discusses the self-selection of drugs, dosages and procedures by local groups, "in keeping with the dominant family traditions, sub-cultures and networks to which they are affiliated, in consequence of factors such as finances or the pace at which they live, etcetera," (Olivier de Sardan, 2005:145). In some cases, the 'perverse effects' of disarticulation produces marked negative effects on the

local community. My work in Bsngan did not reveal significant evidence of this point, possibly because the projects I observed (river protection and pottery) did not relate to heavy industry, agriculture, healthcare or other potentially dangerous lines of work.

The principle of 'sidetracking' occurs when 'target' groups accept development projects for the purpose of exploiting programme resources for their own benefit and that of their neighbours, friends and families. I observed evidence of sidetracking when Masaw discussed turning the river protection program into an eco-touring company, run by him and those from his community. Masaw's ultimate purpose was to sell entrance tickets to tourists. It was clear to me from the start that he had no intention of going along with the National Park's plan to keep people away from the river. These forms of project 'appropriation' by indigenous peoples demonstrate how carefully crafted development projects tend to take on methods and goals that in no way resemble their original form.

#### **2.4 Some Common Examples of 'Peasant Logics'**

Among the vast array of logics existing among 'peasant societies', three can be raised as among the most prevalent. All three strategies are based on survival, preventing cultural assimilation and consolidating power in the hands of local leaders. 'Seeking safety', the first logic, functions on a foundation of living habits that are claimed to have been tested and refined over several generations. Olivier de Sardan gives many peasant societies' reluctance to accept high yield seeds that may produce greater crops in average rain levels, but risk producing almost nothing in low rainfall.

Taking hunting as an example, I have difficulty finding aspects that have not been heavily influenced by advancements in technology. Hunting with a bow and arrow has

been almost totally defunct. Homemade rifles, steel traps and cellular telephones have become standard tools. Some aspects, however, have remained the same. The use of hunting dogs remains common. Rubber boots, while not as modern or expensive as more recent forms of footwear, are still a relatively contemporary choice over other types of shoes or non-footwear; and especially in comparison to the barefoot hunters of the past.

On a more abstract level, however, one may argue the continuation of hunting is, in itself, a form of “seeking safety” (Olivier de Sardan, 2005:146), as it remains a proven, reliable method of feeding families and ensuring income. Even as an illegal act, good indigenous hunters know they can rely on this technique as a form of subsistence and support to their children and parents. As the world around them intensifies pressure to find ‘real work’ and get a ‘real education’, members of the Truku continue to show preference for aspects of life enjoyed in a manner similar to their ancestors.

From my conversations and observations, many of the men who feel this pressure do not have the educational skills to return to school. Most had reach middle age with children who relied on them. This is the life they have known all their lives. I believe it would be unrealistic and unfair to force such a drastic life change on anyone who was put in this position.

This aversion to risk is also observable in Truku business practice. Unlike many Taiwanese, indigenous peoples do not seem to long for business expansion as a goal in itself. Small, local enterprises spot Bsngan and make up the core of economic exchange in town. Emi’s small restaurant is a good example of ‘seeking safety’. After completing college, Emi chose to return to Bsngan to be with her family. She chose to open a small breakfast restaurant, specializing in Truku food, which typically consisted of rice

porridge covered with peanuts and very small fish. Emi explained she had noticed the old people in Bsngan preferred this type of breakfast over the hamburgers and sandwiches of young and middle aged Truku. Though it did not bring in large profits, serving 'traditional' meals also meant Emi could count on steady business from a small number of loyal customers, mainly from her church. Rather than expanding her menu to attract a wider audience, Emi seemed to prefer going with a safer business strategy.<sup>3</sup>

It is the loss of 'routine behaviours' that encourages instability and waning financial safety. Habik, with whom I often ate breakfast, admitted to trying nearly a half dozen businesses over the past four years. With little education or capital, she had been searching for a way to sustain her husband and children. With little access to the subsistence resources of her parents and grandparents, Habik seemed to have wholeheartedly accepted a series of new mainstream business ventures, with little success. From deep-fried squid vending to her ongoing internet arcade, Habik worked hard to provide for her family.

Olivier de Sardan believes the routine behaviour that has sustained societies for generations is now being unfairly criticized by development agents, who are arguably just as guilty of functioning according to the routine behaviour of a bureaucratic structure that has sustained them for just as long (Olivier de Sardan, 2005:146). With stable salaries already assured by their employers, developers propose risk ventures to indigenous and/or peasant populations, encouraging them to break from their way of life with the promise of that without which these people have happily lived for eons (i.e. more money and consumption power).

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<sup>3</sup> I learned Emi later changed her menu to sell eggs and sandwiches. It would certainly be interesting to pursue a conversation with her to find out why she chose to make this change. I would also like to know what has happened to her elderly patrons who may no longer have access to the porridge served by Emi.

This is not to say that a total rejection or acceptance of mainstream Taiwanese life is all good or bad for the Truku. In the broad context of 'seeking safety', it is quite reasonable to see why Truku hunters might agree to trade in their hunting tools for 'better' ones, or Habik seeking new business ideas to help sustain her family, should her current business be too risky or unstable. It is also not surprising that indigenous peoples might visit both a medicine woman *and* a medical doctor. These scenarios serve as examples of the taking and leaving of external cultural traits for the purpose of maintaining a stable life, based on subsistence logic.

## **2.5 The Double Standard of 'Self-reliance'**

In addition to pursuing trusted living habits based on historical evidence, the Truku also employ 'aid seeking' as a strategic logic. As opposed to the 'self-reliance' and 'self-sufficiency' touted by developers as a corner stone of development projects (as if indigenous peoples are oblivious to such a notion), Olivier de Sardan argues that many peasants in developing countries employ structures and strategies to gain as much funding and support as possible, merely because it is available. He reminds us that this is not different from any developer or sociological researcher seeking funding, *per diem* or grants to cover work and living expenses. In the first case, developers and researchers are perceived as legitimate professionals, adhering to written rules and institutional policies that delineate between personal and professional funding. In the case of indigenous/peasant societies, the perception is that money is illegitimately pocketed (Olivier de Sardan, 2005:148).

In order to reconcile these worlds, it is important to understand that self-reliance may be a very worthy goal indeed and is likely shared by indigenous societies, but cannot be successfully achieved if blindly applied to 'target populations'. Developers must expect that it will be partly or fully rejected because it is imposed on local communities by an external source. This relationship must therefore be understood as one with clear rules of engagement, though not necessarily existing in a formalized institutional framework. This creates a more pragmatic exchange whereby indigenous peoples learn to play by informal rules that encourage them to seek 'help', rather than seeking 'help to help themselves'.

More concretely, if a Truku man is injured on the job, he has come to expect he will be cured if he goes to a hospital rather than be taught how to treat his own wounds and sent away. Similarly, when funds are low and families in Bsngan seek further income, it is not necessarily feasible or desirable to seek out training for future careers; they simply want access to enough funding to answer their immediate needs. While an informal risk minimizing network (Olivier de Sardan, 2005:145) exists to a great degree among the Truku, the same cannot be said between indigenous tribes and the rest of the population of Taiwan. I observed many examples of community members sharing their resources to help neighbours who had fallen under hard times. I sat with members of the Presbyterian Church who held weekly public lunches, partly as a service to the community. If development workers are truly concerned with alleviating 'poverty' perhaps they should seek less to help the Truku free themselves from poverty through work skill programs and focus more on supporting and strengthening the existing social

networks that have already been created to ensure that no-one in Bsngan falls through the cracks.

## **2.6 Indigenous Appropriation of Development Projects**

Olivier de Sardan's third strategic logic involves complete appropriation of development projects by specific groups or individuals situated within 'target populations'. This reflects inequalities within indigenous society in their ability to access state funding: "Development is a game which favours those who have the best cards in hand at the outset," (Olivier de Sardan, 2005:149). Likewise, low-status members can also use what little they receive from a development project for purposes other than those determined by developers.

In the case of the pottery class, I did not find evidence that the students had the intention of using their pay to somehow improve their status in the community. Olivier de Sardan suggests some members might try to buy out other people's businesses using development funding, in order to minimize competition (Olivier de Sardan, 2005:149). I did not observe this trend at any time in Bsngan. However, I found Ukan sought to raise his profile in the community through his role class organizer.

In the case of the river protection programme, Masaw had, on repeated occasions, discussed turning the 'joint' project with the National Park into a private business of his own. Though not actually redirecting funds for another purpose, he did intend to alter the goal of the project when he felt his eco-tourism business was viable.

For his part, Ukan constructed his own outdoor, covered classroom and workshop on his property in order to attract development funding. In the past, he had spent project

funds to purchase computers and printers, pay related bills and provide gasoline for his vehicles.

## **2.7 Comprehension-understanding as a Solution to Competing Notional Logics**

As I was packing my luggage before leaving Bsngan, I realized I would not have enough space to bring everything home. I decided to leave an old pair of running shoes I no longer needed. Better still, I told myself, I will offer them to one of the many young men who played Basketball with no shoes on the hot pavement at one of the nearby courts. After playing one of my final games, I thanked the young men for including me in their games throughout the summer and quietly mentioned to one of the fellows that I could not bring back my shoes. I asked him whether he would like to take the shoes to play. The young man instantly burst out laughing and quickly reminded me that he owned shoes, but did not like wearing them to play. He said his ankles were strong, much stronger than mine. Noting that I had injured my leg a few days earlier, he said the Truku are a very physically strong people.

The lesson this young man taught me speaks to Olivier de Sardan's theories about 'sidetracking' and, more specifically, 'notional logics'. Notional logics are, in essence, the unspoken, typically unconscious assumptions we make about our world and the world of others. The cultural divides created by discrepancies in notional logics occur when, according to Olivier de Sardan, "certain notions that developers consider obvious are not shared by developpees," (Olivier de Sardan, 2005:150). Notional logics thus differ from Strategic logics in that social groups tend to be unaware of the existence of the former. It never occurred to me that anyone would want to play Basketball without 'proper'

footwear. I was raised to associate not having shoes with a lack of means, whereas the young man associated wearing running shoes with weakness.

Similarly, it is within the notional logic of the developers that the Truku require financial aid because they lack the opportunities and skills required to make more money. Furthermore, the Truku are assumed to be 'victims of progress' (Bodley, 1999), a people who have been left out of the economic 'miracle' that has swept Taiwan in the past fifteen years. It is taken for granted that the Truku would want to be part of this 'miracle' because, of course, they desire the same accumulation of material wealth sought after by mainstream Taiwanese culture. This logic also assumes indigenous peoples do not suffer from institutional racism or discrimination from employers and lenders. More importantly still, most Truku lack the business contacts needed to gain advantage in the hyper-competitive Taiwanese economy. With this logic as a base, it seems clear why so many development projects have failed to produce the desired economic activity.

On a more abstract level, notions like 'wealth', 'poverty', 'participation', and 'work' are, in themselves, understood and interpreted through notional logics. When developpees do not behave in a manner that meets the expectations of developers, this too is interpreted through the developer's notional logic, creating misunderstandings and misconceptions that lead to mistrust, disappointment and hopelessness for future projects. Indigenous 'resistance' may likely serve as an example of diverging notional logics. While resistance tends to be overt and conspicuous, other forms of non-compliance with development projects may occur unconsciously.

Likewise, Olivier de Sardan is quick to point out that when development projects 'succeed', (that is to say, are accepted by both sides), it is far more likely a result of

“invisible bargaining” rather than the superiority of mainstream development theory (Olivier de Sardan, 2005:151). Taking the river protection programme as an example, it ‘succeeded’ not only because the Truku agreed that raising fish stocks in the Skadang River is of vital ecological concern, but also because it represented an important step toward the reclaiming of land belonging to Masaw and those of his community.

In order for development projects to work, developers must not be satisfied with ‘inclusion’ of local communities in the application of a project, they must spend enough time with the local community to achieve what Olivier de Sardan calls ‘comprehension-explanation’, meaning developers are able to grasp and vocalize the complex cognitive, emotional and spiritual components of a given culture’s notional logics:

“A good comprehension-understanding ‘from the inside’ is the kind that allows us to say: ‘In their position, I myself would act in the same way, and here’s why!’ Mastering this type of comprehension-understanding should figure among the central objectives of development institutions.” (Olivier de Sardan, 2005:150)

It may come to mind that the various levels of the state provide funding to community-endorsed projects in addition to developing their own programmes. Often, projects developed within the community strongly resemble those created by the county office. Does this necessarily mean the state is doing a good job of comprehending and understanding the logics of the Truku? It is important to note that the projects developed by members of the community (i.e. cultural ‘brokers’) are subject to scrutiny by developers of the state. In essence, the latter have the power to determine whether, in their opinion, a given project will benefit to the community while respecting county government policies and procedures. Community-level development brokers thus learn to work within the logics of the state.

The Truku are well aware that a government evaluation of their ideas is being conducted through the lens of a government institution rather than via the notional and strategic logic of those indigenous people who conceived the project. In order to get funding, the Truku have little choice but to make suggestions that are acceptable according to the notional logic of the mainstream, rather than their own. The goal of the Truku in this 'invisible bargaining' is thus to find objectives that can be shared superficially, but that can be altered at the community level in order to permit the Truku to make sense of and benefit from the programme in a manner that suits their perspectives.

This relationship is illustrated by Masaw's sidetracking of the river protection programme and the pottery student's sidetracking of the county government project. In both cases, subsistence living and land reclamation, cornerstones of Truku life, served as the strategic logic, in contrast to the techno-economic logic of Taiwanese government institutions.

For true change to occur, one of two actions must be taken, either apart or simultaneously: a) More comprehension and understanding must be achieved by mainstream Taiwan and/or b) the Truku must persist in their demands for autonomy and the right to govern themselves, by their own rules, in a manner that is consistent with their values and life habits. If anything less is done, the cycle of sidetracking, project dismemberment and deception will continue to the detriment of both sides.

### **Chapter 3 - Leadership and relations with the state**

Throughout the Japanese occupation, the Taroko (including the Truku, the Teuda, and the Tkedaya) were portrayed as the ‘fiercest warriors’ among Taiwanese indigenous societies. They were reputed for their willingness to sacrifice their lives in order to defend their property and way of life. Using headhunting as their preferred method of combat, they were among the last tribes to be suppressed by colonial forces. Events such as the ‘Wushe Incident’<sup>4</sup> helped perpetuate the exotic, frightening portrayal of these northern tribes as resilient, vicious opponents, even in the face of overwhelming odds.

This chapter will focus on the relationship between the Truku and the state by following the work of two leaders in particular. Both served as key informant to my work. Masaw is a mid-thirties father of two whose ancestry is traceable to Skadang, one of the remaining hamlets currently located within the National Park. As the head of a community development association, Masaw offered me considerable insight into the unspoken methods of resistance sometimes employed by indigenous peoples toward the state.

Ukan also demonstrated his expertise in his dealings with the Council of Labour Affairs. As a former police officer and servant to the state, he had gained an understanding of the perspective of the Taiwanese. Now in his retirement, Ukan spends his time lobbying the county government to fund a variety of ‘development projects’ in

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<sup>4</sup> The ‘Wushe Incident’ refers to a violent rebellion in Wushe (in what is now Nantou County) by members of the Tkedaya subgroup (then classified as part of the Atayal tribe) and subsequent suppression by the Japanese imperial army and police. This event occurred in 1930, thirty-five years into the occupation of Taiwan by the Japanese. A new direction emerged from a changing philosophy held by the Japanese with regard to the Atayal and, arguably, all indigenous peoples living in Taiwan. Nearly immediately, policies related to isolation and pacification turned to assimilation of all indigenous societies. Part of this strategy involved the military enlistment of indigenous peoples in the Japanese war effort (Blundell, 2000:157). The descendants of these rebels refuse the ethnonym Taroko and are currently demanding legal recognition as the Seediq tribe.

his community, partly for his benefit as founder of an NGO and partly to create opportunities for those around him. As we will see, both men approach their dealings with the state with the required creativity and political savvy to obtain that which permits them to pursue their own vision for Bsngan.

S-Y Yang's (2005) work with the Bunun tribe addresses the value of analyzing how indigenous peoples relate to the state. I believe there is value in considering examples of leadership by people in Bsngan when dealing with government officials. This has particularly important repercussions on the value placed on land and property within the Truku community. If land tenure has never been formally negotiated between the state and the Truku, how can both parties claim it? Has the state, in fact, gained total control over the forest and mountains? Is it accurate to portray the Truku as complete victims of state power?

Yang's work focused on ethnographic research with members of two communities occupied by individuals belonging to the Bunun, a Taiwanese tribe. Her observations reveal how relations between the Bunun communities and the state help shape their understanding of the leadership among Japanese, Nationalist Chinese and Taiwanese administrative officials. In their negotiation with colonial powers, the Bunun apply their understanding of leadership. In essence, the Bunun represent themselves (and are referred to by present-day Taiwanese government representatives) as cooperative, calm and compliant people in their dialogue with the state, which they represent as a provider, held accountable to that duty. Historically, they were among the first to accept the 'civilizing' projects of the Japanese, joining schools and changing their living habits, partly as a response to aggressive actions of another indigenous society, the Qavalang. By

choosing to align themselves with the Japanese, the Bunun sought to develop positive relations with colonial powers, whom they perceived as protectors.

In addition to choosing to peacefully submit to the Japanese, the Bunun expressed clear judgements on those who did not take this route, as conflict is perceived as leading to nothing and hurting chances for harmony between themselves and communities around them. Yang observes the strong sentiments expressed by the Bunun when two neighbouring Qavalang communities blocked a highway in protest against the local Nationalist Chinese government in the 1970s. The Bunun found this behaviour to be destructive to the possibility of building amicable, mutually beneficial relations (Yang, 2005: 492).

By the same token, the extent to which the Bunun were reportedly willing to go to feed and entertain state officials during local public events further demonstrates the importance they assign to pleasing those occupying positions of 'providers' and 'protectors'. This version of colonial relations spawns from the notion of Bunun leadership, where village heads, hunting party chiefs and other leaders gain the duty and responsibility of sharing their time and resources with those less fortunate or skilled than themselves. To assert oneself as a leader is to accept the responsibility for others around oneself. When government representatives packed up rice cakes and wine to take back to their home rather than sharing it with the members of the community who had come to dance, sing and speak to them, Yang observed statements of scorn and disapproval by the Bunun. Clearly, they felt they had been cheated and disrespected (Yang, 2005:499).

### **3.1 'Aboriginal Festivals' at the National Park**

In Bsngan, I observed a similar dichotomous relationship between the Truku and the administration of the National Park. Despite years of refusing to build or maintain roads leading up to the homes of so many Truku families, (effectively discouraging them from returning to their land), the National Park seems to be keenly aware of the importance of being publicly allied with local indigenous communities. In this section I will attempt to demonstrate how the National Park has carefully negotiated their relationship with the Truku in order to protect their public persona as caring and co-managing partners without giving in to fundamental demands to return land to its original owners. Likewise, I will give rise to concerns and attempt to explain the resulting sources of division among the citizens of Bsngan.

Before embarking on this discussion, it is important to note that I draw a stark line between the individuals belonging to the National Park and the Truku. I do this mainly because it is clear to me that the National Park has taken no active interest in including members of the community in any position of power within their organization. Short of the cafeteria and cleaning staff (mainly hired by a contracted company rather than the National Park), I was told by a member of the staff that no Truku worked in a salaried position at the headquarters, situated roughly one hundred metres from Bsngan. One Amis employee had recently accepted a salaried job, but she/he had been selected from outside the region.

The park employee proceeded to justify the lack of indigenous people on staff. I learned of a competitive examination which is issued to candidates seeking employment with the National Park. This process tests candidates in a variety of areas, including forestry and their knowledge of the flora and fauna in Taiwan. Considering the limited

educational achievement of many young Truku, this exam serves as a major obstacle to allowing them to share their knowledge of the land with tourists or the broader society via the National Park. I could see that, from the park employee's perspective, it seemed only logical that 'the best qualified' candidates be selected, according to a mainstream Taiwanese knowledge base. Truku knowledge of the park was simply viewed as unnecessary. In essence, one could argue the examination process serves to include those with a particular type of knowledge and ideological upbringing, to the exclusion of all others, including the Truku. In short, I met no people from Bsngan who worked at the National Park, other than three women and a young man who served food and cleaned in the park cafeteria.

Simply put, those who work at the National Park headquarters do not belong to the community of Bsngan. They come from afar to live in dormitories located within the confines of the park. During my entire stay in Bsngan, not once did I observe a National Park employee eating at the local breakfast shops or singing at any Karaoke bar, as so many citizens of Bsngan tend to do. I did not see them at church services or at the local Basketball court. Despite their close proximity to the Truku, these employees existed in a very different world.

One of the first occurrences of the National Park's public efforts to partner with the Truku came about early during my time in Bsngan. The community decided to sell some of the foods they make and consume along the main street of the town. In a possible effort to make the event more official, the National Park agreed to lend awning tents to community members who wanted to set up shop to attract tourists. This gesture seemed to serve the purpose of helping to legitimize the activity of the Truku in the eyes of

tourists, though few ever stopped, as they typically travel to the National Park in tour buses that go directly to the headquarters inside the park. In effect, it gave an excuse to those living in the forest to come down to visit with family and possibly sell some of the products they grow and create in their high altitude homes, located on land now mainly patrolled by the National Park police. To my surprise, most of these people still hold legal titles to their land.

While the park staff seemed willing to set up tents and publicize 'aboriginal festivals' every few months, I saw little evidence that it benefited the people of Bsngan. In this particular case, I surmise that by encouraging the Truku living in the mountains to travel down to sell food and homemade chicken soup and alcohol, there was a constant hope by the National Park that fewer may choose to make the difficult trek home. This would be consistent with past attempts by the Japanese and Nationalist Party to convince indigenous people to settle in more easily controlled locations. Since the 1980s, people living in Skadang and Xoxos have been systematically ignored by county officials and national park staff when they make demands for adequate roads to be built up to the two remaining hamlets.

The second example of National Park 'cooperation' with the Truku occurred when the National Park invited a world famous Japanese drumming group to perform on the main lawn of their headquarters. Prior to this concert, a local Truku choir and dancing group were invited to perform for visitors. On the one hand, the National Park may say this offered the chance to the Truku to express their music and dance skills to the world. On the other hand, I learned the troupe members were paid NT\$70.00 per hour (about

CND \$2.50) for their work, as compared to employees of the local 7-11 and gas station, who are paid NT\$75 and NT\$80 respectively.

In this scenario, it becomes evident that a public message is being crafted to create the appearance of cooperation and peace between the community and the National Park. If asked, I believe the Truku would have agreed to perform for free (they effectively did), as they enjoy the opportunity to perform for the tourists who gathered that afternoon. Without painting them in a romanticized light, as many anthropologists tend to do when describing indigenous peoples, I truly believe they were simply happy to be a part of the celebration.

Someone who finds himself at the heart of both this performance and the third and final example is Masaw. At the performance, Masaw was front and centre, encouraging people to dance and helping in the tradition of preparing *Bamboo Rice* for the crowd to taste. I surmise he was integral in getting the troupe to perform for the National Park. They had also sung and danced at the opening ceremony for the Skadang River Protection Programme, an initiative conceived and driven by Masaw. As the head of a development association, Masaw seemed to garner considerable attention from the National Park.

### **3.2 'Co-management' of the Skadang River**

In addition to developing ecotourism on his land, Masaw was heavily involved in another project involving the Skadang River, which runs from through the Taroko Gorge. Despite the strained relationship between local indigenous peoples and the National Park, a group of Truku, led by Masaw and his wife, decided to form an alliance with the

National Park. The project was devised between the two groups, cooperatively, though both groups had clear agendas with regard to the project's ultimate goals.

The official purpose of the Skadang River Protection Programme (as publicized by the National Park) was to limit human contact with the Skadang River so that it may preserve its 'natural' state. It was claimed by Masaw and the National Park staff that school groups, tourists and locals were polluting the river with garbage and disturbing the ecosystem by swimming in the water. This, they claimed, was leading to lower fish counts in the area. The stated purpose of the programme was thus to raise fish counts in the Skadang River. This would be achieved by a team of local Truku patrollers who would walk along the most frequented areas of the river. Armed with whistles and placards, they would keep people from swimming in the water and attempt to educate visitors about the fragility of the area. The National Park agreed to pay for the placards, whistles and caps (donning the National Park logo) for Masaw's group of middle-aged, male Truku volunteers.

I attended the opening ceremony for the Skadang River Protection Programme. After a dance and song performed by a Truku troupe, a large 2m x 4m warning sign was installed against a wall near one of the swimming holes. It was surrounded by pictures of animals and plants and mentioned the area was now 'protected'. As the Truku choir sang and danced, local media were present to capture the making of bamboo rice in what the Truku master of ceremonies said was the 'traditional way'. The volunteers, members of the National Park and Masaw mutually thanked each other for their cooperation. Masaw then led the team down to the water, where volunteers had just stopped a group of Truku children from swimming. On the outside, this event occurred very smoothly. The

National Park had demonstrated their desire to work with local communities. These 'traditional' local people were seen dancing and singing and helping to manage the National Park's environment. Behind the scenes, however, things were quite different.

On one side, the National Park seemed to have much to gain by aligning themselves publicly with a local indigenous community. With regard to public relations, the National Park could obviously claim to be taking local concerns seriously by 'partnering' with local leaders like Masaw. More importantly, by agreeing to *permit* locals to patrol 'National Park land' and by dressing them in National Park clothing, more evidence could be mounted that this land really belonged to the state rather than indigenous peoples. The 'partnership' also provided the National Park with the opportunity to publicly include indigenous peoples in their ranks without giving them any real influence in the affairs of the park.



Children and tourists are told to leave the area as media film the Skadang River Protection team 'in action' (July, 2005)

On the other side, Masaw had his own vision for the future of the river. Similarly to the ecotourism he was attempting to develop in Skadang and Xoxos, Masaw believed he could make the Skadang River clean and vibrant enough to attract fish and other wildlife. This would, in turn, provide an additional attraction for tourists to visit. While this was no secret and did not conflict with the National Park's public position, Masaw then said he would eventually charge visitors for nature walks and the right to see more of the area. As I learned, the National Park flatly denied this idea, reminding Masaw that he could not profit from using the Park's land. Among friends, Masaw said they were mistaken; it was his people's land and this gave them the right to protect it and profit from it as they saw fit. This raised a second problem: How does one determine the membership of the 'community' with whom the National Park was partnering? Why is the composition relevant?

### **3.3 Creating division among the Truku**

Bsngan is actually the result of the amalgamation of six *buluo* [tribal subgroups, or bands], one of which comes from Skadang/Xoxos. Although the Skadang River winds through land belonging to many mountain communities and hamlets, the Skadang Truku were the only members of the river protection programme. It is important to remember the Skadang Truku were the very last community to move down to Bsngan. Some families have successfully continued to resist doing so. Their sense of attachment to the land thus seemed particularly strong, as compared to other, less interested groups. The very existence of the river protection programme therefore caused tension in Bsngan, as Masaw and his wife were accused by other, non-Skadang Truku, of attempting to take

control of something which belongs to everyone, despite the fact that few Bsngan citizens return to the forest any longer. In the complex notions of communal ownership and strict respect for land rights prevalent among the Truku, this accusation was particularly severe.

I suspect this was not accidental on the part of the National Park. It is well known throughout Bsngan that the National Park administration had agreed to offer relatively small grants (NT \$10,000) to local groups to develop a variety of projects, whereas the Skadang River Protection programme received ten times that amount. This may have occurred for several reasons. The first, and the most likely reason, in my view, is that the community deriving from the Skadang region are also a very vocal group who have been fighting for their land for several decades. Those among them who still enjoy farming and living in the forest have also struggled for the construction of a road leading up to their homes. The National Park probably realized the demands would not cease, but could be diverted if money was offered for an alternative project. The second possible reason for paying more for this project than any other is that Masaw was strongly linked to the choir and dance troupe through their church. These performers were useful to the National Park during public events. They often sought out 'traditional' dancing and singing during the summer tourist season. Masaw's group provided a cheap and reliable resource. The third reason for, or result of giving Masaw's group more money may also be to 'divide and conquer' the communities within Bsngan.

I believe the National Park staff understood the jealousy created between the Truku when one person attempts to retain wealth or power for themselves, as it is contrary to the Truku sense of leadership, similar to the Bunun in Yang's research. As mentioned above, leaders are meant to take on the role of benefactor, so that they may

give of themselves to help those less fortunate. By publicly favouring one community over the others, the National Park effectively created a social imbalance and burdened the Skadang Truku with the privileged position.

Masaw did not seem ready to address this issue when a meeting was called after the opening ceremony of the programme. Ukan, in particular, arrived wearing painted facial tattoos, a crown made of mountain deer horns and fur and a vest dawning Truku symbols and weaves. He too wanted to claim part of the river, as well as the partnership Masaw had developed with the National Park. Our landlord also wanted to attend. She was a late 50s widow, a vocal Nationalist KMT party supporter and owner of a large general store in the middle of Bsngan. Her reputation for creating conflict preceded her, and she was discouraged from attending the meeting because she was so enraged. Others felt she would not make a constructive contribution.

I would later learn the programme did not continue past the summer of 2005. Part of the funding for the project was provided by a temporary research grant to a local professor who had been working with Masaw. Regardless, one basic conclusion can be drawn: the National Park achieved their goals of gaining positive media publicity while drawing attention away from their disinterest in building a road up the mountain.

### **3.4 Colonialism, conservation and indigenous land rights**

Colchester's (2004) review of current literature regarding conservation policies and indigenous peoples may provide some insight into the actions, behaviours and expectations of the people of Bsngan, the National Park staff and the county government officials. Colchester ties colonial and expansionist movements directly to the creation of

'national parks', starting with the United States during the mid and late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Following the multiple waves of migrants to the West, indigenous peoples living and thriving in those areas were subsequently moved, both forcibly and coercively, to reserves and new areas. With the denial of indigenous peoples' rights to land and resources through the fulfilling of America's 'manifest destiny', there came the argument that 'primordial wilderness' was worth preserving and needed to be 'tamed' and protected. Colchester argues the American model of top-down, exclusionary conservation policies heavily impacted other colonial powers in Africa, the Soviet Union and colonial India.

Without generalizing the experience of indigenous peoples, Colchester provides a list of frequent outcomes of conservation policies on indigenous societies. They include:

- "Denial of rights to land
- Denial of use of and access to natural resources
- Denial of political rights and the validity of customary institutions
- Kinship systems disrupted
- Settlement patterns disorganized
- Informal social networks, fundamentals to the local economy, lost
- Undermining of livelihoods, loss of property, no compensation
- Poverty
- Disruption of customary systems of environment management
- Enforced illegality – People become 'poachers', 'encroachers' and 'squatters' on their own land and are subject to petty tyrannies by park guards
- Forced resettlement
- Leadership systems destroyed, for if the community leaders accept the relocation they are accused of betraying their people, but if they resist they are proved powerless. Forced resettlement presents a no-win situation to community leaders.
- Symbolic ties to environment broken
- Cultural identity weakened
- Intensified pressure on natural resources outside the protected areas
- Popular unrest, resistance, 'incendiarism', social conflict and ensuing repression." (Colchester, 2004:147)

Many of these themes may be applied to the actions taken by former and current colonial powers in Taiwan. To a great degree, all of these points apply to the experience of the Truku. I would temper the supposition of the disastrous impacts by pointing to the resilience and cultural strength of the Truku. Let us not forget this society has survived artillery bombardments, marauding, military policing by the Japanese, 'sinicization' by the Nationalist Chinese and economic/cultural dispossession by the National Park. Though Colchester's list effectively applies to the Truku, they results may not have had the irreversible outcomes he suggests. Many of these impacts are currently being minimized or reverted through the capacity building of the Truku, in their negotiation with their environment.

### **3.5 'Coercive conservation' in the National Park**

Chi's research (2001) addresses the relationship between the state, the middle class and indigenous societies in Taiwan. Chi portrays these tribes as 'victims of progress' (also in Bodley, 1999), societies that have been unable to negotiate their way through the many waves of colonial powers that have swept Taiwan. While I do not share this perspective, I acknowledge that the Truku no longer enjoy all the land rights to which they are entitled as a result of encroachment by the state and private industry. In short, Chi argues that as unchecked consumption increases, resource extraction will reach further into geographically and culturally 'remote' areas, often occupied by indigenous peoples. Tourism may be considered the latest phase in colonialism.

In Bsnagan, this process is well under way. Physical encroachment has taken the form of mining and tourism. Culturally, the presence of the Internet and computer

gaming have attracted many young people. Though there is evidence the upcoming generation of Truku is leading and increasingly similar lifestyle to their counterparts in mainstream Taiwanese society, there remains signs that all not lost. For example, despite their ubiquitous nature in Taiwan and even in Bsngan, the powerful 7-11 general store has, thus far, been unsuccessful in squeezing out local competition to become the only store in the village, despite attracting many of Bsngan's youth away from smaller shops. On many occasions I was waved away from the store front by neighbours who reminded me that it was cheaper to make my purchases from other local shop owners rather than be overcharged at the 7-11.

Encroachment on indigenous peoples' land serves as a more subtle and dangerous threat: "The establishment of these national parks does appeal to the urban middle class, who enjoy the aesthetic value of a protected natural landscape and who have the money and leisure to spend weekends in the national parks." (Chi, 2001:147) The presence and influence of the Taiwanese middle class consumers is a strong driver behind the policies and practices of the National Park. The Taroko Gorge is known across Taiwan as a major tourist attraction and is promoted by the National Park as one of the few remaining locations where nature is permitted to exist in its 'pristine' state. The National Park is claimed to have been created "to protect the natural scenery, historic relics and wildlife; to conserve natural resources," (Taroko National Park, 2006).

Further to this logic, the National Park website presents the Truku in a manner that supports the notion that the forest is 'uninhabited' and 'untouched by humanity'. The site describes the tribe as an ancient group that has "moved out of the Liwu River Valley [like Bsngan] since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Now there are only a few Truku

people living with their traditions in the park area,” (Taroko National Park website, 2006). This type of description leads readers to believe this group is dispersed and virtually non-existent. The site offers a vague history of the Truku, effectively keeping this people in the past. By identifying them as ancient ‘slash and burn’ agriculturalists, weavers and potters, the National Park encourages a narrative that detaches ownership by the Truku to their land as a result of their near disappearance from the area.

At the same time, the increased demand for the extraction of natural resources has sought out indigenous knowledge and labour power. Chi views this as a form of ‘ecological colonialism’, in that colonial powers recruit local indigenous communities to aid in the exploitation of land, air and water, often in regions belonging to those same communities. I noticed this occurring in Bsngan. In particular, some of the men worked as day labourers in local mines and in agriculture.

In addition to these jobs, some of the men agree to a tacit agreement with local restaurants whereby they hunt and sell wild boar on the land currently controlled by the National Park and its regulations. Though the act is officially illegal and carries heavy fines, the profit from the sale of a boar is significant enough to justify the risk for many people. In addition to the financial remuneration, I observed an overt social prestige attached to the act. Hunters are perceived as ‘Robin Hood’ types, in that hunting serves the dual purpose of feeding friends and family while directly challenging the powers that be. The risk creates a ‘cat and mouse’ game between National Park staff and the Truku, a game the Truku nearly almost always win. This is partly due to their superior knowledge of the forest as well as the sheer size of the land. The men who told me they hunted often did so with devious, playful smiles. Some seemed nervous when telling me this; usually

if we did not know each other well. Others wore it as a badge of pride, adding that, after all, they were only hunting on their land.

It is important to note that the Truku have built a shared historical identity on the theme of resistance against other tribes and colonial forces. I have found that hunting serves as a method for men (in particular) to promote this identity in order to gain prestige and respect from others. After playing Basketball every couple days for over a month with young men and boys, I decided to engage them casually regarding their fathers. I asked them what their fathers did for a living. Some said construction, other yelled out 'drink!' and everyone laughed. One boy proudly said his father hunted, his face beaming. He clearly wanted to impress me with this statement. Soon, other boys enthusiastically corroborated his claim, saying he went up the mountain.

While hunting may offer a form of resistance for the Truku, it is nonetheless dangerous and illegal, according to the regulations of the National Park. The demand for wild boar, *labit* [flying squirrel] and *bada* [muntjac] by the local community as well as restaurants that cater to tourists continues to be an encouragement for the act. Though they are up to the task, it remains that the risk of getting caught, fined/jailed falls on the shoulders of local indigenous peoples. This is not to say that they are being forced into hunting. Rather, I argue that after thousands of years of hunting, it would be unreasonable to think that a park regulation could realistically stop this practice permanently. By encroaching on Truku land and attempting to ban fundamental areas of Truku life, the state has merely emboldened this tribe and strengthened their resolve to maintain their way of life.

Furthermore, I found no evidence that restaurants were being investigated or fined for purchasing animals that had been caught without a permit, possibly because this portion of the transaction has not been outlawed.

It seems reasonable to conclude from this that the National Park are likely aware of the high political and pecuniary costs necessitated to completely stopping the Truku from hunting. In order to maintain the public appearance of 'protecting and conserving nature', the National Park police have, unofficially, turned a blind eye to some instances of hunting, as have some Truku members of the park police. This, in my view, is the unspoken line the Truku and the National Park have drawn in order for both sides to be satisfied. While it means many Truku do not return to their land, it also does not mean the National Park has complete control over what happens in the forest either.

In order for the Truku to be successful in their struggle for control over their homes, fields and hunting grounds currently occupied by the National Park, smaller battles must be won. What seems clear is that quiet negotiation continues in the sporadic exchanges between hunters and park police and community groups and park staff. A more public negotiation is ongoing between the Truku and the county/park administrations on the issue of building a road up to the existing homes. Though the National Park invokes current land laws that block development inside the National Park, many Truku argue these policies are illegal because their inherent sovereignty over their land trumps any attempt at regulate by an external authority. Every win and loss in this dialogue will further shape the lives of the Truku and those who try to control them.

### **3.6 Next Steps: From failed 'co-management' to further decolonization**

At this point in the struggle for land rights, many in Bsnagan have made sincere attempts to cooperate with the county government and National Park officials. They have used a variety of means to have their land returned, but with only minor success, attributable mainly to an uninformed and racist mainstream society that continues to invoke colonial models of nature conservation and property acquisition. Nevertheless, many community leaders are seeking new methods to tackle this problem. It is important to remember many among the Truku are not seeking 'co-management' with any other entity. As a sovereign tribe in their own right, they seek to regain the autonomy they enjoyed for so long. For this to occur, decolonization is a cornerstone of their strategy. Muller (2003) analyzes a relevant method of decolonization, currently in use in Australia. It is known as Indigenous Protected Areas (IPA).

Muller analyzes Nantawarrina, the first indigenous protected area in Australia, in order to understand whether it is a sustainable and positively perceived model according to the indigenous community who run it. They are called the Nepabunna, a society that has survived the application of American-styled 'wilderness conservation' in Australia. Nantawarrina was formerly part of one of the country's many national parks, built on an exclusionary concept of segregation of humans from 'nature': "Concepts of wilderness are not compatible with the reality of indigenous occupations in Australia where Aboriginal people have been actively managing the land for at least 50,000 years," (Muller, 2003).

There is significant evidence to support the claim that the Taroko National Park endorses the hegemonic construct of 'wilderness conservation' in order to retain control of the land. Based on the American model originally applied to Yellowstone National

Park, this school of thought utterly ignores the presence of indigenous societies or their fundamental ties to the land. When park administrators finally agreed to involve the Truku in the management of certain programs following a series of major protests in the 1990s, little power was fully handed back to members of the community. The results can sometimes be disheartening. I did not get the impression from my time in Bsngan that the community felt they were linked to their environment.

On an evening walk with two Truku women aged in their early 20s, we stopped at a look out built by the National Park on the edge of town. It faced the Liwu River and one of the surrounding green, forested mountain faces. Feeling inspired by a recent two day hike with Masaw and others and decided to ask the young woman what they saw when they looked at the hills and forest. I asked them if they went often to walk through the park or to sit by the water. They both looked blankly back at me, saying they hadn't been in the park since they were young. They followed this comment by adding that 'only hunters and tourists go there now'. I concluded the two women had become emotionally, spiritually and intellectually disconnected from the world in which their parents and ancestors had lived since time immemorial. I remember asking myself if this was to be the new direction of Truku society. I believe there is evidence to support the existence of a sharp increase in the diversity of lifestyles and habits in the tribe. I have observed marked differences between the generations of Truku who grew up on their ancestral land and moved down to Bsngan and those who are born and raised with more mainstream Taiwanese living habits and schooling.

When the National Park now negotiates to include the Truku in their programs, they follow a similar line of behaviour described by Muller. She argues that, more often

than not, joint management is 'successful' to the extent to which national parks *allow* indigenous peoples' participation. In essence, it remains an inherently paternalistic relationship, a form of 'internal colonization' whereby the state continues to function on "pre-conceived ideas of what 'Aboriginal aspirations' should be like," (Muller, 2003:32). After observing how the National Park worked 'with' Masaw and his river protection team, I concur with this former statement. In reality, it was the National Park that set the limits on what Masaw and his group in the program. Though Masaw had his own plans, he underestimated the influence of the national park. Initially hailed as a step toward aboriginal empowerment, "partnership" has de-evolved into a poorly constructed compromise, a deliberate token gesture allowing national park managers to retain land, resources and influence while giving the impression they are sharing their power.

Muller evaluates the effectiveness of the IPA according to a series of themes she developed. Based on my experiences in Bsngan, I will offer a short evaluation of the following five 'key themes' which were raised in her research, in order to see how they may be applicable to the situation faced by the Truku. In her assessment of the Nantawarrina IPA program, Muller identifies the following:

A. *Local control in meeting conservation objectives* – Muller rightfully criticizes the creation of a Plan of Management as a planning tool for the development of the IPA. Unlike joint management, where these plans tend to be developed by the state and sent for 'consultation' to local indigenous communities, IPA management plans directly involve indigenous peoples throughout its development: "The community has access to Nantawarrina so that they can pursue their cultural activities, such as hunting and

camping, as a part of their day to day existence,” (Muller, 2003:36). According to Muller, funding and other resources are therefore set according to priorities identified by the community.

In Bsngan, this has yet to be achieved, to any degree. I would add the creation of a management plan may seem too formal and impersonal for many Truku. While many have adopted hierarchical Taiwanese bureaucratic structures (Masaw’s river protection program, Ukan’s artist development classes), there may exist more Truku-inspired agreement structures that better represent values and habits of the community. This may include writing out all documents and convening meetings in the Truku language, publicizing known hunting rules/regulations according to current hunting practices, reviving the roles of medicine women and their indigenous knowledge of flora and fauna and organizing ecological farming/tourism groups to return up the mountain to their homes.

B. *Improved conservation of cultural and natural values*: Muller is vague on this theme, stating simply that ‘conservation outcomes of the program so far are purely anecdotal’, referring to the fact that no flora or fauna data had been formally collected in order to monitor and evaluate whether attempts at conservation are working. Applied to the Truku, I believe many people in the community could offer significant empirical knowledge of the health of the forest and its inhabitants. This could be collected and recorded to monitor the ecology. Considering the presence of a major mining project in the area, this would seem particularly important.

C. *Funding – benefits and problems:* As an umbrella or seeding program, Muller argues an IPA is better suited than other organizations to distribute funds to the community, partly due to the difficulty many indigenous people tend to have accessing funding from larger bureaucratic organizations (her example is the World Wildlife Fund). She attributes this difficulty with conflicting practices and behaviours resulting from having to work with mainstream organizations' non-indigenous models of conservation (non-collectivist land ownership) and structure upon which these mainstream funding bodies base their work.

While IPA may serve as a buffer between non culturally-sensitive funding sources and local indigenous communities, concern by members of the Nepabunna is, in my view, merely transferred to the sources from whom the IPA receives it's funding:

“Funds are presently directed from Environment Australia through the ALT [Aboriginal Land Trust]. This is meant to be a form of monetary protection for the community to ensure the money is accounted for. However, members of the Nepabunna community feel the structure is paternalistic, and would prefer to have the money directly.” (Muller, 2003:38)

I have found a similar reaction among the Truku. The National Park and Donghua University did not hand over the project's funding without holding Masaw accountable according to their own principles. As Muller observes with the Nepabunna, I believe the Truku would perceive limits on their fiscal autonomy as a limit on their power to manage their land.

D. *Community representation:* Muller notes a similar problem to the one I noticed during the opening ceremony of the river protection programme: “The notion of a ‘community’ and ‘representation’ are non-Aboriginal constructs which fail to recognize

the complexities of Aboriginal relationship with land.” (Muller, 2003:39) Similarly to the Nepabunna, those directly involved in the river protection programme were from the Skadang region. Though they have been officially recognized as belonging to the Truku tribe, it would be inaccurate to suggest their views speak for all the Truku. This was made evident when Ukan appeared at a meeting in the National Park cafeteria. He lives among another grouping of Truku in Kele, only a few hundred metres away. Despite this geographic proximity, neither man seemed to recognize much of himself in the other, with good reason.

Given their difference in age and uncommon family lineage, their respective communities would have moved down to from the mountain to different parts of Bsnagan at different times. Ukan has no memory of life in the forest, as his parents were displaced during the Japanese occupation of Taiwan. These men do not belong to the same households or work in the same fields. They also do not belong to the same religion (Masaw is a member of the Presbyterian Church and Ukan is a member of the True Jesus Church), nor do they have the same relationship with non-indigenous peoples. As mentioned in earlier chapters, few exchanges occurred between the multiple *buluo* (bands) located in the mountains. If the National Park is to fully recognize indigenous control of the land, it must not limit the parties with whom they will negotiate, in order to privilege a single portion of the community, as this fails to address the interests of other households. While this may complicate negotiations, it is necessary to empower all members of the Truku community by resisting the homogenizing tendencies of colonialism.

E. *Formal recognition of community land management ability:* This is, for Muller, a vital aspect of the decolonization process. Formal recognition for the creation and success of Nantawarrina was gained through the United Nations on World Environment Day in 2000. This type of acknowledgement provides an important source of legitimization to the cause of indigenous peoples while strengthening the case for Indigenous Protected Areas. The award not only brings pride to the community, but serves as a symbol of support from other indigenous and non-indigenous societies.

Despite the many co-management programs attempted by the Truku and the National Park, I saw no evidence of recognition by outside groups or bodies. In the absence of such recognition, I detected a sense of transience from those with whom I lived, as if they knew these partnerships would not last. It was not only a negative feeling that I detected *per se*, but rather an acceptance that once funding ceased, so did the programme, leading them to simply seek out new programs proposed by the National Park or the county government. If the Truku retook full control of funds, perhaps they would reserve money to seek out public recognition of their achievements and successes.

F. *Gender biases:* With this point, Muller takes aim at the marginalization experienced by Nepabunna women in the negotiation and running of the IPA. Despite exerting much control in private spheres, they remain excluded from decision making processes, with regard to land management and conservation. She argues that equitable power must be gained by women in order for their knowledge and skills to be added to complete a gap presently being experienced in the IPA. Furthermore, Muller recognizes

that “decolonization needs to take account of the fact that the process has been gendered, affecting men and women differently.” (Muller, 2003:39).

Based on my experience with the Truku, I am not fully convinced by Muller’s logic. While I believe equitable access to resources, power and respect must exist for all people and are fundamental for the formation of a just society, I am also of the opinion that gender roles, rights and responsibilities must not blindly or systematically be prescribed by outside forces onto other groups. Those who seek decolonization must remain weary of outsiders who, typically out of a sense of justice, attempt to apply their values to the decolonized society. Muller does, however, echo the voice of Nepabunna women, who say they are not satisfied with the predominance of men in the management and coordination positions within the IPA.

In Bsngan, and particularly in the river protection programme, I found Masaw to be working very closely with his wife. While the Truku are categorized as patrilineal, I found that men seemed averse to public conflict with women, thus providing women a social space to speak out public protest or in a leadership position. While Masaw was the official leader of the river protection programme, I was present when his wife fervently answered questions and publicly challenged those who criticized the project. While I agree this may not qualify as fully equitable roles, I believe Truku women in Bsngan do have a significant voice in public affairs.

### **3.7 State control of indigenous change**

I witnessed a frustrating moment in Bsngan as I followed Ukan in his negotiation with the county government. Though often perceived as a comprador of the ROC state

because of his former career as a policeman (now enjoying a generous pension) and a vocal KMT party supporter, I found Ukan a strong supporter of his community through his various projects. Under an autonomous government, Ukan might have more support for his work from a local council. Under the current hierarchy of power which places the Taiwanese government on top, Ukan found his efforts to improve life in Bsngan held back by bureaucratic politics in the state.

I accompanied Ukan to the county Aboriginal office in Hualien on a number of occasions. Seemingly well known at the office, Ukan was greeted warmly by members of the staff. I sat in on his meetings with the head government official as he and Dr. Simon discussed their idea to develop internet marketing of indigenous peoples' art and handicrafts. Ukan was seeking funding to start the program, which would make web space available to indigenous artists to display their works and sell their products. The project also sought to promote knowledge of indigenous east coast artists in Taiwan. The idea was generally well received, but the county head did not seem totally convinced of Ukan's project. After each meeting, I felt badly for Ukan. It was obvious he wanted to make his vision for indigenous artists into a reality. In order to gain more local support, we assisted Ukan in organizing an afternoon presentation and discussion session for about thirty indigenous artists. A goal of the sessions was to present Ukan's ideas in order to get their endorsement.

The session with the artists was very productive and the messages seemed well received by the participants. I helped prepare a presentation to explain how First Nations and American Indians had successfully entered the global artisan market with their websites. Dr. Simon discussed the potential to reach a wider audience and promote

indigenous art to collectors who may not otherwise know about indigenous societies in Taiwan. The artists' response was very positive and Ukan seemed very encouraged by their response. Upon completion of the session, a report was drafted and submitted with an application for funding at the appropriate government office in nearby Hualien.

A few days following the sessions and meeting, Ukan was visited by two workers from the county office. Ukan was visibly excited to see them pull up his driveway. He invited them to sit in his outdoor eating area and served tea, not something he typically did with all guests. The men's air was sombre as they were greeted. After exchanging pleasantries, one of the men set a long explanation. They had decided to visit Ukan to announce the funding would not be made available. I would later learn that the real reason for withholding their support was more politically charged than I had realized. In short, Ukan was told he had received *too much* funding for his previous projects to be able request more at the present time. The county employees agreed that funds were available, but they did not feel it would be well perceived for one person to gain access too so much money from the state. Ukan was very disappointed in the decision and attempted to persuade the men to reconsider, but to no avail.

Before passing judgement on the actions of the county government, a few points should be raised. First, it is important to note the decision not to support Ukan could just as likely have been made under an autonomous Truku government. When comparing contemporary Taiwanese state functions to imagined indigenous ones, it can be tempting to reify or romanticize the notion of a utopic indigenous government. Currently, jealousy and factionism in Bsnagan is propped up by externally created town councils, political parties and state offices. I have observed the longstanding divisions as a result of state-

created positions of power within Bsngan (i.e. township head, school principle, church leaders, and national legislative representative).

The fight for autonomy through decolonization must not create false expectations of how indigenous societies may govern themselves. At this point in the struggle, it seems vital for the Truku to confront what they do not accept about their present condition. They must acknowledge the role outsiders have played and are currently playing in this situation, in an effort to rekindle faded social structures that has provided them with the home-grown remedies needed to move toward greater degrees of independence. True autonomy will not be reached as long as current structures of power remain in the externally prescribed model of governance.

## Closing Thoughts

In her work with the *Bribri* tribe of Costa Rica, Anja Nygren (1998) addresses indigenous societies' ongoing struggle with colonialism and hegemonic power. She argues the 'deep imprints' left on Bribri culture after hundreds of years of colonialism and domination are more than evident. Similarly to the Truku, Bribri spirituality has been transformed and rendered applicable through its incorporation of the threat posed by colonial discourse (Nygren, 1998:53). The attempted domination and subsequent resistance are proven articulations of the relational power existing between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples throughout the world.

Rather than focusing on a static, dialectical relationship, Nygren believes it is more telling to understand 'ethnic reconstruction' as subversive, developing within an overarching mainstream culture: "In the Bribri case, this means that instead of waiting for a radical change of power through a single act of liberation, the Bribri struggle to deconstruct white dominate by critically challenging the morality of the white subjugation" (Nygren, 1998:54). This point rings very true in my experiences with the Truku in Bsngan. I can think of so many examples of formal and informal tactics to subvert state and mainstream cultural habits and practices that have been utterly rewired to suit the needs of local Truku. From changing school curriculum (to help raise Truku-speaking and thinking young people) to the promotion of county archery competitions (to help hunters improve their skills and fraternize publicly), there exists an impressive amount of evidence to support the argument that the Truku are successfully rejecting any attempt at 'othering' that occurs via the discursive structure of mainstream Taiwanese society, development 'experts' and presumptuous anthropologists.

Of all the people I met in Bsngan, it was often the young men and women who interested most. While their parents' generation plans and deconstructs state programs and openly challenge National Park regulation through hunting, teenaged boys find no contradiction, no moral dilemma in working at the local 7/11 before going to his Truku dance troupe that afternoon. While he may not speak Truku with his friends, he cares enough to know how to converse with his grandparents. While those who came to Bsngan as children fight for change, the children and young adults are *living* it. As their identities continue to form, they are actively choosing how they will present themselves to the world: as Truku, as students, as Presbyterians, as outsiders and as insiders.

If "ethnic identity is negotiated in economic, political, and cultural terms" (Nygren, 1998:55), it must surely mean that the struggle for Truku cultural meaning will not end with Masaw or Ukan. Their children and grandchildren will need to find their own way of subverting the structural inequalities that exist in their generation, should they acknowledge the struggle before them.

It is difficult to predict how the Truku will take up future resistance. Since there is no single, monolithic indigenous culture in Taiwan, the variety of unique historical indigenous experiences offers us a multitude of examples of strategies employed by indigenous societies in an effort to adapt and survive. In Bsngan, I observed some specific directions forged by upcoming generation which I would like to briefly share.

First, it seems important challenge the popular perception that all rural indigenous societies are suffering from a mass exodus of its young people. Not all young adults are leaving Bsngan to live their lives elsewhere. Emi, mentioned in earlier chapters, chose to return to open a successful breakfast restaurant with her mother, after completing some

professional training. Another young man left for two years to sing professionally in Thailand and Indonesia before returning home to open a trendy coffee shop and restaurant in a nearby town. In both scenarios, what is significant is the belief that life is better at home, that there is reason for hope in Bsngan.

I observed the turmoil experienced by one Truku man in particular. As a Skadang Truku, he had been instrumental in the creation and operation of the River Protection Association as they negotiated their partnership with the National Park. His relative youth and knowledge of computers made him a very valuable member of the group. When the association was looking for patrollers to enforce the swimming ban, he smiling told me the older men had enthusiastically put his name in to volunteer. It is important to understand this fellow was only visiting Bsngan for the summer, while on break from his studies outside town. Likewise, when it came time to elect leaders and representatives of the association, he was thrust forward as a candidate. He was told he would receive a decent salary and would have his needs cared for by the association. Meanwhile, the young man was in the process of completing university in international business and thinking of life outside Bsngan. I remember him laughing nervously as he described the group of older men as they tried to convince him to stay and carry on what he effectively considered to be their fight. While he wanted to respect what the townsfolk were trying to accomplish, he had little desire to reestablish himself in the community.

Similarly, several young men, all aged 18, were leaving at the end of the summer to complete their mandatory military training. Though many young people in Taiwan circumvent the military portion by completing alternate civil service duties, the young

men with whom I spoke and played Basketball were eager to leave home and join the Taiwanese armed forces.

In both scenarios, we see the allure of mainstream culture for many young Truku. None of the people with whom I spoke seemed openly concerned about the struggle faced by the youth in their tribe. Though they clearly gave thought to their futures, I did not hear of their concern for land or the potential loss of their culture through assimilation. What does this mean for the future of Bsngan? Is the older generation doomed to see no one take up their fight for their land?

I believe the answer lies in the women and men of the Skadang Truku. As the last group to come down from the mountains (some still retain title and use of their land), they strike me as the group with the strongest sense of attachment to their property. One teenaged boy in particular stands out in my mind. I saw him on the Basketball court many afternoons, then later, working at the 7/11. In addition, he was also the lead dancer in the Skadang dance troupe that performed at public events I attended. He was a polite, quiet young man around me, yet quite involved in the affairs of his community. I would be particularly curious to return to Bsngan to see what direction he had chosen at this point in this young life. I remember inspired by the simple balance he has struck between his indigenous identity and the hyper-competitive world outside Bsngan.

In a way, I believe this will be the route that will provide the Truku with new cultural survival strategies. By planting a proverbial foot firmly in both worlds, individuals may be able to effectively navigate between competing cultural interests. By leveraging power from both sides to their advantage, future generations of Truku will find a new way of protecting what is theirs. Granted, some of Bsngan's young have

chosen to leave completely. For example, during my brief visit, two young women (one of whom I met) had left to live respectively with an Australian and a British man. As I was told, it was unlikely they would ever return to live in Taiwan, let alone Bsngan. Does this mean their cultural history will necessarily die out as well? I believe it presumptuous to answer this question with too much certainty, as the Truku are certainly not unaccustomed to relocating and reestablishing their ethnic identity.

In his research with the Truku, Michael Rudolph (1998) has noted the growing 'postcolonial' and 'post-national' traits of an increasingly powerful Taiwan. Many Taiwanese perceive a continued threat from China, which is depicted as homogenizing and hegemonic. In contrast, many consider the indigenous peoples' movement to be an expression of Taiwan's equally powerful heterogeneity. The author draws parallels between indigenous and non-indigenous societies, focusing on 'government elites' who seek to disassociate themselves both culturally and politically from China in order to strengthen their position internationally. Using multiculturalism as a platform for the 'construction of Taiwanese subjectivity' (Rudolph, 1998:13), these elites look to the Truku and other tribes in order to demonstrate *authentic* indigenous values and social practices: "The more convincingly Aboriginal elites succeed in displaying the cultural particularities of the Aborigines the more they can count on the support from the government elites" (Rudolph, 1998:13).

Thus, land tenure may very well serve as a central component not only for the future of the Truku in Bsngan, but for Taiwan as a whole, in its parallel struggle to garner support for and control over its own land. With regard to hunting specifically, Rudolph proposes an additional interesting point. Referring to a public conflict which occurred in

the 1990s between the National Park and nearly 2000 protestors, the author reminds us there are still many areas of Truku culture which remain 'holy', hunting being one of them. Under the continued pressure from environmental protection groups and the state via the National Park, functioning under the discourse of development, little is predicted to change in terms of public policy on hunting.

The official stance taken by the state against hunting demonstrates a breakdown between the multiculturalism project and the true limits of that tolerance. The reality that hunting remains illegal speaks to the selective, strategic partnership non-indigenous society has attempted to form with their 'new' indigenous allies in the spirit of diversity and national distinction. Meanwhile, the reality that hunting persists despite its current illegality speaks to the ability of the Truku to transcend these externally enforced limitations. The small battles for hegemonic occurring within civil society are shaping how each group may define and control the other. This is, perhaps, the primary message of this thesis: As long as the Truku retain the will to live in a manner of their choosing, they will find a way to doggedly, strategically and systematically win the small battles that will ensure a thriving cultural identity.

Like other indigenous societies, the Truku are being forced to fight for what has been theirs since time immemorial. On the one hand, elites like Ukan and Masaw must play along with state officials and park police. Publicly, they support mainstream values of environmental conservation and public accountability. Within the community, they also lead their neighbours and family members along a non-congruent agenda, that is to say a Truku-centred discursive structure that places autonomous land control as a defining characteristic.

The relatively rapid loss and progressively slow regaining of their land will remain central to the people of Bsngan if future generations continue to hold this as an indicator of their indigenous identity and collective history. For all intents and purposes, I believe there is sufficient evidence to support the notion that the battle for autonomy will be won, not necessarily through violent quarrels or with the support of external political movements or mainstream media, but through small, quiet successes. A road *will* be built to Skadang and land *will* be taken back, not through the courts, but through constant returns up the *hunter's paths* to the mountains, and quiet settling of cabins and hunting camps. The Truku will take back their land on their own terms, with or without the permission of outsiders. It is merely a question of time.

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