

THE TAO PEOPLE'S ANTI-NUCLEAR MOVEMENT

**Indigenous Religion, Presbyterian Christianity,
and Environmental Protest on Orchid Island, Taiwan**

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Abstract

In 1982 Taiwan Power Company, a government-owned utility, began to ship nuclear waste to Orchid Island, the homeland of an indigenous minority people known as the Tao. Currently there are over 100,000 barrels of nuclear waste on site. Since 1988, the Tao people have been mobilizing resistance to rid Orchid Island of the waste and reclaim the island as their ancestral land. This paper focuses on the influence of the hybrid religious situation of the Tao on the nature and form of their resistance to this environmental and cultural colonialism. Drawing on their indigenous worldview and customs, the Tao people articulate a view of the environment in which nature and culture are integrated. At the same time, many of the Tao people identify with Presbyterian Christianity, and so the Tao Anti-Nuclear Movement (TANM) has been influenced by Christian concepts of social justice and a growing awareness of environmental issues among Christian churches worldwide. Ultimately, TANM presents a view of the environment in which humans are embedded within the natural world and offers an environmentalism that seeks to connect social justice issues to environmental degradation.

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Abbreviations

TANM	Tao People's Anti-Nuclear Movement
Taipower	Taiwan Power Company
PCT	Presbyterian Church of Taiwan
JSM	Just Sustainability Movement
TEK	Traditional Ecological Knowledge
AEC	Atomic Energy Council
ATA	Alliance of Taiwan Aborigines
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Introduction

In 1970 the Taiwan Power Company (Taipower) and Taiwan government officials informed Taiwan's smallest indigenous minority, the Tao (Chinese: 達悟族; also known as Yami 雅美), that they intended to build a fish cannery on the Tao homeland, Orchid Island (Lanyu 蘭嶼). This would, they said, produce jobs and be good for the local economy. But the fish cannery was a lie: it was, in fact, a nuclear waste storage facility under construction. In 1982 Taipower began to ship nuclear waste from Taiwan's nuclear power plants to the repository on Orchid Island. Currently, there are over 100,000 barrels of nuclear waste on site. Since 1988 the Tao have been actively protesting to demand the removal of the waste from their homeland. Recently, the Tao have joined other environmental activist groups for mass protests in Taipei city to demand the phasing out of nuclear power in Taiwan. By engaging in these protests and through speaking out at various forums, such as the third quadrennial Global Greens Congress Convention, the Tao have been able to draw national and international attention towards Taiwan's nuclear power regime. It has taken the Tao decades to achieve such widespread political recognition.

Since nuclear waste storage began on Orchid Island, the Tao have been struggling for almost thirty years to gain support from an unresponsive and indifferent government. By staging protests beginning in 1988, writing press releases, lobbying and creating transnational links of affinity with other environmental activist groups the Tao have recently gained considerable media coverage and momentum. Despite this, there is a lack

of scholarly writing on the Tao's anti-nuclear movement (TANM) and the unique socio-political dynamics that shape their struggles. How their religion and culture frame their view of the nuclear waste repository and inform their methods of protest has yet to be considered. This paper shall explain TANM in light of these considerations with a focus on the way the hybrid religious situation of the Tao has been an important factor in the nature of their resistance to this environmental and cultural colonialism. Drawing on their indigenous worldview and customs, the Tao articulate a culturally informed view of the environment in which nature and culture are integrated, and deploy traditional religious practices in their public environmental protests. At the same time, many of the Tao are strongly influenced by Presbyterian Christianity, which has had a strong presence on the Island since the 1950s. As a result, the TANM has also been influenced by Christian concepts of social justice and the burgeoning of a global awareness of environmental issues among Christian Churches (Hessel and Radford Ruether 2000).

This paper thus seeks to frame the Tao people's perception of the nuclear waste and their resistance strategy as much as possible from within their own religious understandings and cultural perspective. This perspective emphasizes the interconnection of the cultural and economic realm of human beings with that of nature and ecology. Within Tao cosmology, Orchid Island is considered a sacred place where non-human and human agents co-exist within an interconnected cosmological and ecological system. For the Tao, animal and plant life carry economic, social, and spiritual value. Therefore, when their environment is threatened, this is not simply an ecological or economic threat, but also an attack on the cultural identity of the Tao as a whole.

It is also necessary to place this cultural-ecological worldview within a historical perspective of colonization, which has made the Tao increasingly marginalized and vulnerable. Since Chiang Kai-shek fled China and set up his authoritarian regime on Taiwan in 1949, the Tao have been subjected to varieties of oppression. Government controlled programs such as extraction of resources, land management projects, housing projects, village relocation programs, and government-regulated tourism have all compromised the Tao people's agency. These government actions have had a negative impact on both Orchid Island's ecosystem and subsequently Tao culture. The nuclear waste repository is yet another government-sanctioned project that has left Tao discriminated against, disenfranchised, and disempowered. The Tao are forced to bear the environmental burden of the majority, while those on Taiwan proper reap the benefits of the nuclear program.

The Tao perceive the nuclear waste repository as a colonial enterprise and they respond by making use of Christian and traditional Tao religious principles, structures, and symbols. During protests the Tao dress in traditional attire and perform ritual exorcisms in order to drive away the evil spirits represented by the nuclear waste. These rituals may be understood as rituals of resistance that contain both religious and political significance. Such rituals reaffirm the Tao traditional view of the environment and communicate to others that the waste is disruptive to their cosmology and thus threatening to their culture. The rituals also serve as a means by which the Tao authenticate their collective identity in hopes of attaining increased political recognition as a people. The rituals then have the effect of politicizing the nuclear waste issue as a social problem rather than solely an environmental or health concern.

In the face of an unresponsive government the Tao have made use of the Presbyterian Church of Taiwan's (PCT) global network to bring their concerns to broader national and international audiences. The Presbyterian Church has had a long-standing role in advocating social justice and indigenous rights in Taiwan. It was in fact with considerable financial and organizational support on behalf of the PCT that the Alliance of Taiwan Aborigines (ATA) was created in 1984 (Stainton 2002). Within TANM church members and ministers take on leadership roles by organizing protests and forums, and by facilitating transnational cooperation with other environmentalists. Along with other prominent TANM voices, church members often speak out to national and international news venues, disseminate press releases, and write letters of appeal to legislators in order to articulate the nuclear waste predicament as both a social justice matter and an environmental abuse.

By drawing from these religio-cultural resources, the Tao articulate an environmentalism that significantly differs from the dominant environmental paradigm in Taiwan, which has been heavily influenced by mainstream global environmental discourse. As Robert Weller (2006) demonstrates, the Taiwanese largely adopted their understanding of the environment from Euro-American discourses stemming from Enlightenment and Romantic period philosophy. TANM is suggestive because it presents a way to understand nature and environmental issues that significantly differs from mainstream environmental thinking. The dominant environmental paradigm essentially views nature and humans as separate realms in which the major question is how they ought to relate to each other. Environmental issues are often perceived as challenges for science and technology rather than social policy or cultural identity. TANM, conversely,

presents a view of the environment that places humans within nature and advocates an environmentalism that emphasizes the connection between matters of social justice and environmental degradation. By drawing a connection between the social and the environmental TANM is part of a significant global environmental trend emerging from the peripheries, the Just Sustainability Movement (JSM) (Cox 2010).

The JSM takes a more holistic approach to environmental reform than preservationist and conservationist trends guiding much mainstream environmentalism. JSM does so by seeking to address both ecological problems and their related social issues. The movement recognizes that it is primarily the marginalized and disadvantaged portions of the population who often bear the brunt of poor environmental management policies. In seeking to redress this fact, JSM promotes eco-democracy and just sustainability. JSM strives to ensure that the burdens and privileges produced by environmental management are dispersed evenly across populations. JSM also pursues more inclusive opportunities for those individuals affected by environmental policymaking to be involved in decision-making processes. JSM has gained prominence because of grass roots initiatives (Agyeman et al. 2003: 4) such as TANM and is now seen to be having profound effects on environmental research and policy making (Taylor 2000: 508). For instance, the Earth Charter, which has been endorsed by national and international associations, world leaders and heads of state, as well as global institutions such as UNESCO, stresses the linkage between justice and environmental sustainability. As more groups, like the Tao, disenfranchised by faulty environmental policies or practices emerge on the international stage to express their grievances, JSM's assertion

that environmental quality and human equality are inevitably linked becomes more difficult to ignore.

The following paper involves a multi-methodological approach. Historical data is interpreted using a post-colonial critique in order to demonstrate how the Tao perceive the nuclear waste repository as a colonial project, which may be located on a historical trajectory of internal colonization. In order to uncover the ideological foundations of TANM's environmentalism the religious climate on Orchid Island is defined in detail making use of both anthropological and autobiographical accounts. A detailed analysis of TANM is then provided demonstrating how the Tao connect social justice matters to their environmental concerns. Applying a functionalist definition of ritual it is argued that the Tao employ ritual as both a traditional religious practice and a symbolic form of communication with political significance. Secondly, a discourse analysis is provided outlining TANM's three primary discursive strategies: culturally constructed narratives, human rights rhetoric, and biblical rationale. Robert Weller's ethnographic research in *Discovering Nature* (2006) is then used to define the dominant environmental paradigm in Taiwan and to illustrate how TANM falls outside this paradigm. Finally, Robert Cox's (2010) just sustainabilities framework is used to illustrate how the TANM may be interpreted as part of the broader JSM.

Chapter 1

Historical Background

Orchid Island: A Colonial History

The Tao people reside on Orchid Island, a 45 km² island 79 km from Taitung, a city on the southeast coast of Taiwan. In the Tao language Orchid Island is called *Ponso no Tao* or *Pongso no Tao*, meaning “island of the people.” Known for its natural beauty, the island is lush and covered by tropical rainforest and large grey rock formations. The center of the island is mountainous and occupied by a lake referred to by locals as *Do Mawawa*, “ghostly sea,” a remnant of an old volcano. Adding to its natural beauty, the island is home to many endemic species such as the golden wide winged butterfly (*Lepidoptera: papilionidaename*) and the scops owl (*Otus elegans botelensis*). The only road encircles the island connecting the seven communal villages.¹

According to local legend the Tao believe their ancestors were Filipino islanders who came from the Batanes archipelago roughly eight hundred years ago (Loo et al. 2011). The Tao share more linguistic and cultural similarities with these Filipinos than they do other Taiwanese aborigines of Austronesian descent. The population on the island is only 4,000 people, and it has been estimated that of 4,000 people 2,400 are aboriginal Tao and the remainder are Han Chinese migrants. Therefore, the Tao are Taiwan’s smallest, most isolated, and culturally distinct minority group. Their geopolitical circumstances have shaped much of the tribe’s recent history. Their marginality

¹ The seven villages are: Yayu (Yeyou 椰油), Iraralay (Langdao 朗島), Iranumilk (Dongqing 東清), Ivarinu (Yeyin 野銀), Imourud (Hongtou 紅頭), Iratai (Yuren 漁人), and Iwatas (Yiwadasi 伊瓦達斯).

and seclusion have made the Tao especially vulnerable to unjust government policies and practices. Their cultural differences and isolation has also made it more difficult for the Tao to unite with other aboriginal groups to mobilize collective political resistance.

Anthropologists along with the general Taiwanese populace regard the Tao as maintaining the most well preserved indigenous culture in Taiwan (Arrigo et al. 2002: 2). This is because the Tao have been isolated for much of their recent history due to geographic location. The Japanese were the first known outsiders to map Orchid Island in the seventeenth century, naming the island Tabako-Shima. However, prior to Japanese and Chinese colonization the Tao experienced periodic contact with the outside world. The Tao until approximately three hundred years ago traded items such as gold, silver, pigs, and goats frequently with the Batanes Islands (Di Genova 2012; Hun Loo et al 2011). On occasion seafarers trading goods and shipwrecked travellers would come to Orchid Island seeking shelter from typhoons.

The Japanese took colonial rule of Taiwan under the Treaty of Shimonoseki (1895). The Japanese closed Orchid Island to public access by designating the island as an ethnological research site. Scholarly interest in Orchid Island was fuelled not by the desire to assist the Tao, but by Japan's desire to learn more about the Japanese empire. The Tao have levied complaints of being treated like research specimens and not as people by anthropologists (Tai-Li 1993). Japanese anthropologists referred to Orchid Islanders as the "Yami," the Tao word for "we." Since then, Tao intellectuals have fought to reclaim authority over their own culture and have had their official name changed back to Tao (www.dmtip.gov.tw/Eng/Thao.htm). Although the Japanese kept the island fortified, enabling the Tao to preserve much of their traditional culture, Japanese

occupation did have a lasting impact on Orchid Island's ecology in that during the Japanese colonial era (1895-1945) phalaenopsis orchids were picked to near extinction and sold abroad (Di Genova 2012). It is a sad irony that Orchid Island, named for its abundance of orchids, is now completely barren of these unique and beautiful flowers.

When the Kuomintang (KMT) fled to Taiwan in 1949, Chiang Kai-shek set up an authoritarian regime and ruled under martial law. During this period, Taiwan's outer islands, including Orchid Island were fortified and placed under strict military control (Arrigo et al. 2002: 2). The effect was to place Orchid Island more firmly under the direct control of the Taiwan government and to isolate it from other commercial interactions with Taiwan or the mainland. Although Chiang Kai-shek permitted missionaries access to the island in the 1950s, he did not open it up to tourists until 1967.²

Despite Orchid Island's historic isolation and the Tao people's reputation of holding the most well-preserved indigenous culture in Taiwan, their life has been impacted by outside influences. It is a popular misconception promoted at times by Taiwan's ethno-tourist industry that Orchid Island has been left untouched by time. The Tao community has felt the force of modernity, globalization and, most significantly, internal colonization, which have impacted their surrounding environment and their culture. They have been attempting to negotiate their cultural identity and political positioning in the face of these complex socio-political circumstances.

² Missionaries arguably also had a colonizing impact on the Tao people by changing traditional aspects of their culture (ritual practices and beliefs). However, most Tao do not perceive any conflict between Christian vocation and Tao identity and regard PCT as a historic ally in their resistance to internal colonization. This will be considered in more detail in the following section on religion and culture.

It is necessary to investigate the Tao people's historic relationship with the current Taiwanese government in order to appreciate the ethos of their anti-nuclear movement and in order to define the nuclear waste incident as a development along a continuum of internal colonization. The term internal (or domestic) colonization is used here to denote the structural political, social, and economic inequality between Orchid Island and Taiwan as a nation. This imbalance of power has fostered a desire among the Tao to renegotiate their socio-political circumstances and has fueled strong demands for autonomy (Taipei Times, June 7th 2000).³ Internal colonies are typically distinguishable by a cultural variable, be it ethnicity, language, or religion (Abercrombie et al. 2000: 183). The Tao are distinguished from the Taiwanese majority in all these regards: they are Taiwan's smallest and most culturally distinct ethnic minority.

The government has exerted its control over Orchid Island and has capitalized on the Tao's weak political position. The "Digital Museum of Taiwan's Indigenous Peoples," a government website (www.dmtip.gov.tw/Eng/Thao.htm), states quite clearly that "a number of Tao intellectuals have acknowledged one thing, the decisive power is in the hands of the outlying political society, in other words, the political power of the ethnic groups in Taiwanese society at large." Taiwanese government policies and national projects have managed the land and the people for the benefit of those more closely associated with the political and economic center of Taiwan and to the detriment of the Tao people. Internal colonization took many forms: land management projects, housing projects, education policy, and government regulated tourism. The consequences

³ Several Taiwanese legislators regard Orchid Island as an ideal place to establish an aboriginal autonomous region; however, an aboriginal autonomy bill in Taiwan has yet to be passed due to complicated nature of this sort of legislation.

of these policies can be seen in terms of environmental degradation and cultural assimilation (Hu 2007:4). The following are incidents relating to each of these forms of internal colonization.

1. Land Management

The first large scale intrusion of the KMT government came in 1958 when approximately 2,500 convicts were sent to Orchid Island to serve their sentences. Allocation of land for military camps and prisoner farming went on from 1958 to 1979, compromising Orchid Island's fertility and ecological diversity (Hu 2008a: 5). In order to build accommodation for prisoners the KMT took land the Tao used to produce their principal crops such as millet, taro, and sweet potato. National reforestation projects went on from 1973 to 1984 in which culturally significant local plants and trees were replaced with foreign species (Hu 2008b: 58). National grassland expansion for cattle farming as well as reforestation projects cut into the Tao's ancestral groves. These development projects also depleted cai tree stock, the Tao's preferred wood source for constructing houses and boats (Hu 2007: 14).

Since inception of these land management programs the Tao have fought hard to reclaim their ancestral territories. Hu (2008a: 15) informs that after "aggressive protests, all these projects including reforested hills, pastoral farms, and army camps have been abandoned and returned to the Yami." However, these changing landscapes have had long lasting negative impact on Orchid Island's environment and subsequently Tao culture. The alteration of ancestral groves depleted the Tao's local fruit supply of pali, viveven, kamala, and payin (Hu 2008b: 57). Many rare endemic species of plants and animals have since become endangered. The alteration of the landscape also negatively

impacted Tao culture. For instance, depletion of cai tree stock and principal crops interrupted the conduct of ritual life (Hu 2008a:14-18) because the harvesting condition of cai fruit and other foods determines when the Tao hold a feast or collective ritual. Depletion of cai tree stock has also caused social and spiritual anxiety among Tao communities as the harvest of cai tree fruit represents an “ancestral blessing of the forest gardens” (Hu 2008b: 58-63); ancestral spirits are understood to “coexist and assist with the production of biologically diverse subsistence.” Poor harvests are interpreted to be a sign of intergroup conflict and spiritual disconnect from ancestors.

2. Housing Projects

A further affront on the Tao traditional lifestyle came in 1967 when Generalissimo and Madame Chiang Kai-shek visited the island. Appalled by the traditional Tao dwellings, they ordered the destruction of these homes and the erection of concrete houses, a policy, which continued until 1979. As a result of this policy, only one village survives, Ivarinu (Yeyin 野銀), where these traditional structures may be seen. Traditional Tao dwellings are comprised of three units. The separate living and work areas are partly underground in order to protect from typhoon winds. They also keep cool in the summers and warm in the winters. The third unit consists of a separate sitting area perched on stilts and is used for catching cool winds, relaxing, and visiting with friends. The concrete homes that replaced these traditional dwellings have been crumbling and deteriorating because they were not adequately built and cannot withstand the intense weather to which the island is subjected (Arrigo et al. 2002: 3). This has been a source of grievance for many Tao as it is regarded as a direct attack on their traditional way of life. Arrigo et al. (2002: 3) report that many of the older generation objected and continually

moved back to their old homes until “despite tears and entreaties” they were bulldozed. Also, these government housing projects negatively affected Tao’s ritual life as the construction disrupted or destroyed many ritual sites for fish worship and spring water gathering (Hu 2008c: 188).

3. Educational Policy

The KMT government also attempted to assimilate the Tao people through education. The island’s only high school was founded in 1970 and students were expected to attend from Monday to Saturday mornings. The educational regime was designed to assimilate students to Chinese culture: courses were solely instructed in Mandarin, and emphasized Chinese history. Many of the Tao people’s younger generation have since lost the ability to speak their native tongue (Arrigo et al. 2002: 2). Long school days and an extended school schedule also had the effect of taking children away from time spent with elders and parents, time during which they would have learned important cultural narratives, as well as practical knowledge about traditional farming. The Tao have recently been investigating possibilities for language renewal through communication with their Filipino cousins from the Batanes Archipelago.

4. Government Regulated Tourism

The KMT government decided to open up the island to outsiders in 1967. Since then, eco- and ethno-tourism have attracted people to visit Orchid Island. Tourists come to take in the beauty of the environment as well as to explore “exotic” Tao culture. Orchid Islanders have pointed out some of the negative environmental repercussions of the tourist industry. For instance, TITV weekly news source has reported on the damage done by tourists to the natural landscape. In a news segment on October 7, 2008, Tao

elders are reported complaining about tourists leaving their incense and garbage behind. The Tao are also particularly reluctant to have their pictures taken by tourists as they have felt objectified by both anthropologists treating them as research specimens and tourists treating them as a novelty.

The tourist industry in certain instances has also served as a catalyst for cultural colonization. For instance, Hu (2008a: 9) explains that local places were renamed to attract tourists: “Replacing Yami names with those of the Chinese signified the new policy of landscape management and a new sovereign power that ignore the important connotation of native names.” By renaming important spiritual sites the government interrupted the Tao’s cultural memory. Native names for these sacred places are associated with traditional mythology and folklore. These stories become obscured when native names are replaced and eventually forgotten.

Some locals welcome visitors and view the tourism industry as an economic opportunity as well as a chance to redefine, save, and share their culture. Now many local Tao make a living by selling souvenirs and jewelry, or by providing homestays, restaurant, and other services to tourists. Some local Tao people provide forest tours to visitors in which they recall and share traditional folklore associated with the traveled ecology. Such endeavors represent innovative ways to restore and redefine Tao traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) and culture. Whether or not tourism becomes an overall benefit for the Tao depends on many variables including the degree to which the Tao are afforded agency and given economic opportunity to manage the industry, as well as their own ability to successfully negotiate between globalizing influences and their own cultural traditions and values.

5. Modern Challenges

Globalization has brought motorized boats, scooters, new business opportunities, and merchandise to Orchid Island. Globalizing forces have integrated the Tao into Taiwan's market economy and have made the Tao increasingly dependent on outside funding and businesses. In interviews with Orchid Island residents Hu (2008b: 61) reports, "There is an everyday complaint in common conversations about the increased dependency on market economics and imported goods from Taiwan." The Tao community seems to be in a liminal state, transitioning from a traditional subsistence lifestyle to modern industry. Negotiating between cultural continuity and these new economic possibilities has been a modern challenge. Another factor that has challenged cultural continuity has been that modern conveniences, new jobs, and educational opportunities have enticed young people to migrate off the island and into big cities on Taiwan. Arrigo et al. (2002: 2) report that "mostly elders and children under their care still reside on the island." Although some Tao return to the island to serve their people, this social reality has had the effect of diminishing Tao communities' work force.

What may be discerned from this discussion is that the Tao have been struggling to hold onto their traditional culture and salvage Orchid Island's environment in the face of modern challenges. This task has proven to be considerably difficult because they have experienced decades of internal colonization. Government projects and government-sponsored tourism have been undertaken in absence of any participatory engagement with the Tao communities. As a result Tao traditional way of life, their culture, and Orchid Island's environment have been compromised. The consequences have been "unemployment, landlessness, poverty, and cultural dissolution" (Hu 2008b: 55). Now,

the Tao fear for their future as a tribe as well as for the sustainability of Orchid Island, concerns they understand to be deeply interconnected. These fears have been exacerbated by the Taipower nuclear waste incident.

The Nuclear Waste Repository: A Colonial Enterprise

In 1970 the government owned utility, Taiwan Power Company (Taipower), began preparation for a nuclear waste site to be built at Dragon's Point, the Southern most tip of Orchid Island. In attempts to avoid any resistance Taipower did not provide the Tao with an opportunity to consent or negotiate the project on fair terms. Mei-Fang Fan (2006: 418) relates that the decision was made behind closed doors with privileged access for technocrats without consulting the public. Government officials and Taipower employees deceived locals by falsely informing them that they were building a fish cannery and that this would be profitable for local business (TITV, March 27, 2009). The following excerpt from an interview conducted by Mei-Fang Fan (2006: 424) with one Tao respondent encapsulates how Tao communities felt taken advantage of throughout the process: "The authority probably looked down on Orchid Islanders and considered that we know nothing. Therefore they threw the nuclear waste on Orchid Island."

The infrastructure was built two stories high and three stories underground with the capacity to hold 100,000 barrels of waste (Arrigo et al. 2002: 3). In the late 1980s Guan Xiarong, a well-known Han photographer and social critic went to Orchid Island to spend a year with the Tao. Having lived closely with the community, Guan informed them about the facility and the harmful effects of nuclear waste (Rudolph 2008: 43). Then the Tao knew nothing about nuclear power, Orchid Island did not have electricity,

yet the Tao were forced to bear this hefty environmental burden while the Taiwanese majority reaped the benefits of Taiwan's nuclear program. After martial law was lifted in 1987, the Tao wasted no time in staging their first protest and performed a ritual exorcism as an act of resistance in 1988. This was followed by a series of intermittent protests from 1989-1991. Despite the Tao people's dissent Taipower continued to ship barrels of waste to the repository. The situation gained widespread international attention when Kuo Jian Ping, a Presbyterian missionary, held demonstrations in Taipei with the support of anti-nuclear groups in 1991 (Marsh et al. 1993). Now facing more national and international pressure, Taipower made promises in 1992 to remove the waste by 2005. However during this time Taipower continued to ship more nuclear waste to the facility. It was not until 1994 when reports finally surfaced that barrels had corroded and were leaking nuclear waste that Taipower finally agreed to stop shipments (Arrigo et al. 2002: 4). In 1997 Taipower signed a contract with North Korea to relocate the waste; however, the deal did not survive because of an international outcry over the matter (The Economist, May 29, 1997).

The poor safety standards and inadequate monitoring of the repository have continued to fuel the Tao community's mistrust of Taipower and the government. In the late 1980s when the leak was first detected at the repository, the mishap caused the Tao to have doubts about Taipower's surveillance (Fan: 2006, 419). Lower safety standards in comparison to other facilities on Taiwan are suggestive of a colonial mentality and discriminatory attitude on behalf of Taipower as lower standards imply a lesser regard for the Tao people. On March 1st 2012, the Tao protested in front of Taipower displaying pictures of decaying nuclear waste barrels (Loksin, March 2nd 2012). It was reported that

after seeing the pictures Tien Chiu Chin, legislator of the DPP, wondered in comparison to nuclear waste storage facility at the Guosheng Power Plant in New Taipei City Wanli District, which is fully air conditioned with humidity control, “why is the nuclear dump site on Lanyu so primitive?” She promised to press the government on the matter. This point illustrates that it is not solely Tao suspicion but that politicians too have come to recognize Taipower’s discriminatory practices.

When questioned on the safety of the storage site and waste contents, Taipower officials tend to defer or respond with mixed information. For instance, when the deal was made with North Korea, Green Peace hired a British nuclear engineer, John Large, to inspect the site. Although he was only permitted partial access to the dumpsite, The Economist reported that, “Green Peace said it gathered enough information to confirm that the site contains much higher levels of waste than Taipower had acknowledged” (The Economist, May 1997). When pressed on the matter, the Atomic Energy Council (AEC) explained that Taiwan classifies waste differently and that the concept of low-level waste takes into account everything except spent nuclear fuel.

There have been various studies done periodically by environmental groups, as well as a report done by the Academia Sinica that have detected Caesium-137 and other manmade isotopes in taro fields on Orchid Island (Arrigo et al. 2002: 4). Taipower has issued several statements to respond to these studies reiterating the safety of the waste and declaring that they have been handling the situation in accordance with international standards (Loksin, March 2012). These assertions however, seem to contradict what the Atomic Energy Council had stated to Green Peace years prior about Taiwan classifying waste differently.

The Tao argue that the waste is having a negative impact on their health, safety, general wellbeing and environment. Elders complain of deformed fish, decrease in marine life, rising cancer rates, and stillborn births. However, Taipower and the Taiwanese government typically respond by arguing that levels of cancer have risen in Taiwan generally and that there is no connection between the nuclear dumpsite and such problems. Much of this back and forth argumentation misses addressing some of the fundamental issues. The Taiwanese government, the AEC, and Taipower all typically respond to the Tao in technocratic fashion with a cost-risk-benefits analysis. Their strategy of appeasement has been limited to convincing the Tao that the repository poses no risk to their physical health and to providing the Tao with compensation packages, which include subsidization of medical services, refurbishment of churches, cheaper electricity and other benefits. (Fan 2009: 168). However, the majority of the Tao are not appeased by this compensation, as they do not share the same technocratic worldview as Taipower or AEC. They wish to maintain their sacred and ancestral relationship to the land and money cannot buy this. The Tao perceive the nuclear waste repository as threatening to more than just their physical health and environment. The waste has disrupted their interconnected ecological and cosmological world and thus also poses a grave threat to their culture

Some academics also argue that the compensation programs on Orchid Island have in fact worsened the situation through allowing for further destruction of the environment and have made the Tao increasingly dependent on government funding programs (Arrigo et al. 2002: 4). For instance, Arrigo et al. (2002: 4) explain that since the installment of these compensation programs large amounts of cement have been

poured on the Island. The road and boat launching areas have been paved and cement walls have been erected around them. Wildlife experts warn that the wall may block the spawning migrations of land crabs, “traditionally a prized food source” (Arrigo et al. 2002: 4).

Mei-Fang Fan, who has conducted focus groups on Orchid Island in order to uncover variant perceptions of the risk of nuclear waste warns of treating the Tao community as a homogenous entity (2009: 167-176). Certain Tao community members are satisfied with compensation as a solution; others are attracted to other solutions that do not necessarily involve the removal of waste from the island. Some Tao are employed by Taipower or have gained educational opportunities through the firm’s scholarship programs. Those Tao individuals are sometimes apprehensive about speaking out against the repository for fear of losing their jobs. However, the majority of the Tao would like to see the waste gone and institutional procedures made more democratic. They would like to gain increased political recognition and agency as a people and would like to ensure a degree of cultural continuity for the tribe. This may be evidenced by the fury of protests that have gone on this past year. Reporting on the results of focus groups she conducted, Mei-Fang Fan reveals, “Yami participants ... emphasized that the tribe could not give up protesting against the nuclear waste for the huge amount of compensation or job opportunities. It seems that the threat posed by the nuclear waste repository and the continuation of the tribe and tradition are the main concerns” (2006: 423). To address these concerns and mobilize resistance against this internal colonization, the Tao have made use of religious and cultural resources. In doing so, they imagine and present an

alternate environmentalism which embeds humans in nature and which connects social justice issues to environmental reform.

Chapter 2

The Religious Climate on Orchid Island:

Sources for an Alternative Environmental Ethic

In order to uncover the ideological foundations of TANM and in order to appreciate the growth of the movement it is necessary to understand the complex religious situation on Orchid Island. Both traditional Tao religion and Presbyterianism have been an important factor in the nature and form of the Tao people's resistance strategy. Presbyterianism developed on Orchid Island as a locally represented independent presbytery. Many ministers are of Tao descent and have included traditional Tao concepts and symbols into church teachings. Therefore, many of the Tao are influenced by a hybrid religiosity, which integrates both traditional Tao and Christian beliefs and values. The following section explains the significance of both religious traditions for TANM.

Tao Indigenous Religion and the Environment

The defining worldview of TANM is significantly informed by the Tao traditional view of the environment, which views nature as intrinsically valuable and spiritually significant. Human beings are embedded into and are participants in the natural world. "Nature" and "culture" are not viewed as distinct realms but are inseparable interpenetrating components of lived reality. The Tao see themselves as "members of a larger land community" (Fan 2006: 420). They interact with and are interdependent with non-human agents: spirits, both ancestral and malevolent, embodied in biological life. Ancestral spirits embody the land and animals and are said to "coexist and assist with the

production of biologically diverse subsistence” (Hu 2008b: 72). A healthy ecology is understood as both an ancestral blessing and a signifier of an exuberant spiritual life. The Tao then regard their home, Orchid Island, as both a sacred and ancestral land that is central to their culture and they link the ecological vitality of Orchid Island to their future as a tribe (Fan 2006: 419).

Prior to the impact of modernity and globalization, the Tao claim they held a sustainable and communal way of life that reflected their cosmological beliefs and embeddedness in the natural environment. This consisted chiefly of a subsistence lifestyle relying on flying fish, farming sweet potatoes, taro, millet, harvesting shellfish, and gathering fruits from ancestral groves. For the Tao, such biological material holds more than just economic or alimentary value. Animal and plant life carries social and spiritual significance.⁴

In order to understand the integration of nature and culture in the Tao worldview, it is helpful to examine how the Tao express their relation to land and non-human animals through their folklore, taboos, and ritual.

1. Folklore

Within Tao traditional culture there are many local legends and stories that have been passed down from generation to generation. Many of these legends serve to express the Tao people’s ancestral and spiritual connection to Orchid Island. For instance, the Tao origin myth may be interpreted to express the belief that humans are embedded in nature. According to local legend, the Lord of the Skies selected Orchid Island as the

⁴ Jackson Hu (2008a: 5) recorded the following catalogue of species on Orchid Island that carry some sort of religious significance for the Tao: spiritual rocks (14 sites), useful plants (116 sites), magic animals including boar, birds, and other wildlife (34 sites), subsistence sea life (12 sites) fishing activities (27 sites).

ideal place for the Tao people to exist. Lord of the Skies sent down a boy in rock and a girl in bamboo from the heavens to the island. Once they landed the boy broke free from the stone and the girl walked out of bamboo. They met each other later on and bore children from their knees (“Tao origin myth” World Summit of Indigenous Cultures http://indigenous.pristine.net/index_en.html). Therefore, the first Tao ancestors were “heavenly beings” who came from stone and wood. For Tao descendants this signifies that they were given Orchid Island by Lord of Skies: it is then both their sacred and ancestral land. Also, the first Tao ancestors were born out of natural elements; this emphasizes a metaphysical connection to nature. Other Tao legends relay how to interact with the environment in order to maintain natural balance with the ecosystem. For instance, according to the Tao there are many varieties of local legends where Bamboo and Stone man have reappeared before individuals to urge people not to waste anything given by the creator and to use only resources as necessary (Di Genova 2012).

Jackson Hu (2008a: 5) explains that indigenous names for plants and animals are often associated with ancestral folklore and also sometimes serve to delineate familial territory and trees. Unfortunately, because Orchid Island’s ecology has rapidly changed due to internal colonization and globalization, this has had a negative impact on oral transmission of these narratives. For instance, in the work Hu has done with the Tao to recover traditional ecological knowledge (TEK), he explains that, “some villagers forgot old stories if they had difficulty tracing the associated ecology after fruit trees had mostly disappeared” (2008a: 7).

2. Taboo

Taboos are another important feature of the Tao traditional religious system and help to govern social and environmental interactions. Taboos are prohibitions of an action based on religious or moral beliefs. For the Tao, taboos are often religious in nature and it is often the negative implication of taboo that is emphasized. Taboos are followed for the fear of “anito,” the Tao word for evil spirits. It is believed that if anito are angered they will harm the lives of those who break taboo. However, if the people follow taboo, Hu (2008a: 7) explains, “benevolent anito spirits would bring forth the richness of the ancient ecosystem and feed families with fertile taro, millet, and fish.”

Within the Tao taboo regulatory system several taboos serve to encourage the proper management of the ecosystem through cultivating sustainable environmental practices. Ching Ping-Tang et al. (2010) write about how within Tao communities a variety of taboos have supported the maintenance of healthy coastal fisheries. For instance, there are traditional guidelines associated with boat construction and crew recruitment for fishing expeditions. Tang et al. write, “these taboos put serious constraints on the ability of the Tao to conduct large scale fishing activities that might endanger the sustainability of fish stock” (2010: 105). This is because the taboos in place make inaugurating a boat and embarking on a fishing expedition an arduous endeavor that takes time and careful planning. This helps prevent overfishing. There are also complicated taboos associated with fishing methods. Tao traditional fishing methods include lighting a torch by night in order to entice fish to jump into the boat and fishing using a net above the water’s surface to capture the flying fish (2010: 105-106). These are

sustainable methods because they are least invasive and disruptive to the ocean's ecology.

The Tao traditional taboo system is changing due to the presence of Christianity on the island and the Tao people's interaction with imported values. Younger generation Tao seem to be questioning some of these "age old traditions" which may have lost their functionality. For instance, Trista Di Genova interviewed Teresa, a young Tao nurse who returned to Orchid Island to serve her people. In interviews Teresa questioned the taboo, which placed a prohibition requiring new mothers to remain indoors for three months for fear that anito will be drawn to the smell of breast milk. However, Teresa refrained from driving in her car with her child for fear of a potential anito attack (Di Genova 2012).⁵ This illustrates how certain taboos are falling out of favor while others are persisting.

Certain anthropologists have argued that Christianity has eradicated some of the fear of anito and that this has meant in certain instances taboos are not being followed because there are no longer any perceived repercussions. For instance, Ching-Ping Tang et al. (2010: 105) have argued that, "as more Tao converted to Christianity the traditional taboos that actually imposed constraints/costs fell out of favor." However, there is stronger empirical evidence to suggest that in many circumstances Christianity has not eradicated the fear of anito but has altered tradition and is being employed as a further measure against these evil spirits. For instance, Trista Di Genova (2012) reports on her interviews with the Tao as follows:

⁵ Trista Di Genova is a graduate researcher at Taipei Medical University who has conducted fieldwork on Orchid Island. In order to complete her four-part exposé on Orchid Island (2012) Di Genova was given access to research conducted by Academia Sinica's now discontinued Orchid Island research group.

One source, Lou Tsu-K'uang, says by 1956, "(Yami) ... consider the magic powers of the new religion well worth giving a try. They apply religious pictures and the Bible as a means to chase away evil spirits in case of sickness, adorn themselves and their children with rosaries and medals, side by side with their own charms and strings and tufts of goats hair.

In fact anito are sometimes equated with Christian concepts of demonic powers. As shall be shown in a more detailed analysis of TANM, this has occurred when Presbyterian ministers perform ritual exorcisms. The Biblical view of evil spirits in fact blends with Tao cosmology. Both traditions hold similar conception of evil: that there are malevolent forces that come to the earthly world and interact with human beings. In both cases evil may be manipulated by religious formulae.

Although the traditional Tao taboo regulatory system has been altered, adapted, and diminished, it seems several Tao are still following a variety of taboos. The Tao taboo system reveals how the Tao traditional worldview differs from the modern technocratic imagination. Whereas a modern technocratic mentality elevates human beings over natural systems and believes there will always be a technological solution for environmental issues, the Tao taboo system places restrictions on human use of the natural environment. This is because the Tao traditional worldview sees human beings as integrated into and as interdependent participants in the natural world.

3. Ritual

Ritual is another fundamental aspect of Tao traditional culture. Ronald Grimes (2006: 135) suggests that in ritualizing, "human beings discover then embody and cultivate their worldviews, attitudes, and ethics." He explains that contemporary scholars and political activists are now exploring the potential of ritual as an effective means to combat the environmental crisis as they may serve to cultivate an environmental ethic. He

points to John Seed and Ruth Rusek who lead a series of “re-earthing” rituals and workshops. They have formulated contemporary environmentally oriented rituals as a method to cultivate “felt connections with the earth and its creatures” within practitioners. This they believe will lead to environmentally responsible and moral citizens (Grimes 2006: 132). Grimes suggests that this new investigation into the connection between ritual and ecology is fed by an interest in indigenous cultures (2006: 133).

Here the Tao may serve as an example because, for the Tao, rituals have been effectively employed to cultivate felt connections to the land, plants, and animals. For instance, during flying fish season the ritual process is divided into different parts, including the blessing of the boats, praying for a bountiful catch, summoning the fish, first-fishing night ceremony, fish storing ceremony, and fishing cessation ceremony. During flying fish season the women also sometimes perform a “hair dance,” flipping their long hair down toward their feet and then up towards their head emulating the motion of waves. All these rituals serve as a means by which Tao communities give praise to the ocean as well as receive and revere the flying fish as a sacred gift. Therefore, fishing practices are not solely economic endeavors but also carry religious significance. Such rituals, similarly as the Tao taboo regulatory system, also contribute to the maintenance of sustainable coastal fisheries as they serve to regulate the times it is permissible to fish as well as the amount of fish each family receives. For instance, during the fish storing ceremony only enough fish is given to each family for that given year.

Jackson Hu (2008b) has discussed how Tao ritual life has been affected by outside influences. Internal colonization has caused ecological degradation, which has disrupted the execution of rituals either through depleting materials required to properly conduct rituals or by destroying or disrupting ritual sites. Hu (2008a: 8-14) also discusses how Tao communities have begun to engage in new forms of ritual singing and/or ritual feasting in which they recall the “golden days of old.” He explains that in contrast to the traditional grand ritual feasts a modern ritual feast requires imported meats and commercial cultivars of taro, yam, and sweet potatoes from Taiwan. During these ceremonies Tao elders sing and tell stories of the “golden days of old” a time in which Orchid Island had a rich ecology and the Tao people were spiritually fulfilled.

Rituals, folklore, and taboos collectively serve to maintain a cosmological order and ecological balance in regulating transactions between humans and their natural environment. They express the Tao people’s central belief that nature is imbued with ancestral and spiritual significance and that human beings hold a place therein. This understanding of the environment is a defining feature of TANM and continues to frame other ways Tao communities interact with modernity.⁶

The Presbyterian Church of Taiwan and Social Justice

The second defining feature of TANM is that it seeks to connect principles of social justice to environmental reform. This feature may be explained partly in terms of Tao

⁶ The traditional Tao view of the environment may be located in recent attempts made by the Tao to manage the island’s eco-system by re-inventing and incorporating traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) with modern technology and institutions. For instance, the Ecological and Cultural Conservation Association was founded 2001 with the dual mission to restore the Island’s ecology and rebuild the dignity of Tao culture.

traditional culture and partly in terms of the influence of Presbyterian Christianity. Tao traditional culture embodies certain principles of social justice. For instance, the Tao are widely regarded to be an egalitarian people and have been referred to as the least stratified of the indigenous groups in Taiwan (Arrigo et al. 2002: 2). Ching-Ping Tang et al. (2010: 104) explain that the Tao do not have a unitary authority or permanent chieftainship at the tribal community corporate level that “significantly affected the conduct of public life.” The Tao also have a “gift exchange” culture that has promoted mutually beneficial interpersonal relationships. For example, during boat launching festival the boat is filled with taro then in a spirit of sharing it is distributed accordingly to each family in the community.

However, the TANM in alliance with the Presbyterian Church of Taiwan (PCT) advocates a more universal understanding of social justice that is expressed in human rights language and is often theologically interpreted. The PCT’s relationship with the Tao community and involvement in their anti-nuclear battle may be characterized in the following ways. For one, Presbyterianism evolved on Orchid Island as a locally represented and independent presbytery. As a result the Church is attuned to Tao communities’ socio-political circumstances, needs, and interests. Secondly, the PCT’s involvement in TANM fits into a longer history of the Presbyterian Church’s involvement in advocating social justice, democracy, and indigenous rights in Taiwan. Lastly, the PCT is a globally connected institution and has been able to use their global network to reach out to broader national and international audiences to further TANM causes.

Presbyterian missionaries from Great Britain and Canada came to Taiwan in the 1860s and 1870s to establish churches, schools, hospitals, seminaries, and presses all over the island (Rubinstein 2001: 64). Stainton (2002) explains that the majority of these missionaries came to Taiwan on short visits and that local aboriginal clergy were quick to take over. Thus, many of the churches were established with local participation and leadership. Also, the PCT from the period between 1945 and 1949 reorganized and restructured their presbyteries to make them independent and to ensure they were locally or regionally representative (Rubinstein 2001: 66-70). Because the churches have developed to be autonomous and culturally relative they cultivated a close connection to and empathy for the communities whose interests they have historically represented (which are often indigenous communities).

Chiang Kai-shek opened Orchid Island up to missionaries in the 1950s. Now, virtually the entire island identifies in some way with Christianity. Ching-Ping Tang et al. (2010: 105) estimate that 60 per cent of the Tao are Presbyterian and the remaining 40 per cent are Catholic. Since Presbyterianism came to Orchid Island in the 1950s, the establishment of an independent and locally represented church was incorporated into its mission. Ministers were ethnically Tao and they integrated traditional cultural values into Christian teachings. Thus Presbyterian Christianity evolved as an indigenized reformed type of Protestantism on Orchid Island. Mei-Fang Fan (2006: 169) suggests, “Christianity has framed the surface and higher level of Yami traditional belief system, both being seen as coexistent and not in conflict with each other.” Christianity was made compatible with traditional Tao religion through efforts of the clergy; tradition was adapted and compatible features of both faiths were emphasized. For instance, the fact that within Tao

religion there is a powerful Sky God made the Christian conception of God more fathomable.

It could reasonably be argued that Christianity has had a colonizing impact on the Tao since Christianity has altered traditional beliefs, and Christian influences have remodeled the traditional taboo and ritual systems. Christianity has also changed other aspects of traditional Tao culture. For instance, Arrigo et al. (2002:1) explain how missionaries “shamed” the Tao into wearing more clothing. Originally, the Tao wore minimal clothing: men wore nothing but a loincloth and a vest. However, missionaries encouraged more “modest” attire according to their “Christian sensibilities.” Despite the impact Christianity has had on their traditions many of the Tao do not perceive Christianity to be a colonial threat nor do they perceive any conflict between being culturally Tao and being a devoted Christian (Tang 2010).

Whatever the Tao’s own religious vocation or view of Christianity, there is no doubt that missionaries have supported the Tao community throughout Orchid Island’s rocky history. For instance, Ching-Ping Tang et al. (2010: 105) write that Christian missionaries on Orchid Island “devoted themselves to improving the welfare of the islanders and played key roles in mediating disputes between native police officers, soldiers, and bureaucrats from government agencies in Taiwan.” Locals often recall stories of missionaries becoming involved in disputes between Orchid Island and Taiwanese authorities. Barry Martison writes of this in his autobiography, *Song of Orchid Island* (2006). Recalling a conversation with a Tao friend Martison writes:

“Did you know our Priest?” I told him I had heard of Father Giger and his tragic death in a car accident the year before.

“He always helped us” Molung continued, “He would even scold the soldiers when their cows trampled on our sweet potatoes. He was afraid of nothing.”

The other boys sitting around Molung nodded as he spoke and stared listlessly at their sunbaked feet.

“We miss him,” they said.

(Martinson 2006: 7)

The missionaries were unafraid of acting as intermediaries with “official authorities” because they were connected to a broader network of global Christians who supported them and enabled bolder speech and action.

The PCT’s involvement in TANM reflects their close relationship with Tao communities yet it also aligns with the PCT’s history of driving social justice matters forward in Taiwan. The PCT is widely recognized as a supporter of indigenous peoples and furthering their rights as people in Taiwan. Michael Stainton (2000) a scholar, missionary, and President of the Taiwanese Human Rights Association of Canada writes,

The Presbyterian Church and its Aboriginal members have for decades played a central role in shaping, organizing, and leading Taiwan’s Aboriginal Movement. Indeed it is only a movement rather than a series of fragmented initiatives because of the consistent vision and efforts of the Presbyterians who have tied efforts together over years and disparate communities.

The list of indigenous movements and political battles that the PCT has come to support is very long; however, a few significant events require mention here. In the 1970s the church became involved in the Taiwanhua (Taiwanization) movement and fought for the right of local Taiwanese groups to print bibles and hymn books in their own languages. The PCT has also been an active voice in the land rights movement (1981–2000) and helped found the Alliance of Taiwan Aborigines (ATA) in 1984 (Stainton 2002). As Rudolph (2008: 40) explains, a major motivator behind the aboriginal

movement was the church's ideology, "which was heavily oriented towards liberation theology." Many leaders of the movement were aboriginal clergy and were heavily influenced by this theological approach, which combines Marxist social analysis with Christian values.

The PCT has often used human rights language accompanied by theological interpretation to defend the rights of various indigenous groups and to defend their own involvement in such matters. The Taiwanhua movement is a perfect illustration. In the 1970s when KMT's linguistically imperialist regime forbade the use of any language other than Mandarin, the PCT began preaching "ethnic resurrection" in order to fight for the right to use indigenous language in Bibles and hymn books (Stainton 2002). Imagery of the Biblical Christ dying on the cross and then being resurrected was symbolically equated with the death and resurrection of indigenous languages and cultures. Similarly, during the land rights movement the PCT argued for the return of indigenous lands in theological fashion by describing indigenous communities as "God's chosen people" and by representing their lost lands as "the promised land." Therefore, to deny indigenous communities' rights over their territories was not seen as denying them what they claimed historically but what was rightfully theirs given by God. Other oppressive policies were similarly denounced as "violations of God-given rights" (Stainton 2002).

The PCT has also issued two documents, one in 1996 and another in 2001, pronouncing their role in Taiwan's public sphere as a defender of human rights based on theological convictions. The 1996 Declaration on Human Rights begins, "Our Church confesses that Jesus Christ is Lord of all mankind and believes that human rights and a land in which each one of us has a stake are gifts bestowed by God." It ends with a prayer

and an excerpt from Psalms 85: “We beseech God that Taiwan and all the rest of the world may become a place where ‘Mercy and truth will meet together; righteousness and peace will embrace. Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven.’”

These lines encapsulate the PCTs vision of social justice. God bestows universal human rights equally upon all humankind, and Christian values such as empathy and compassion encourage political action. A just world is God’s righteous world. Human rights are defended not because they are enshrined through international treaties or legislation, but because God has given them to mankind. PCT continues to support indigenous communities in negotiating their fundamental rights based on these theological convictions. This trend carries into and colors the TANM.

Lastly, the PCTs involvement in TANM can be characterized as expansive because the church has enabled the movement to grow through its broad global network. The church has used its global leverage to advance many of the other political battles they have pursued from within Taiwan. For instance, Murray Rubinstein describes how during the Taiwanhua movement the PCT used their global ties in the West to challenge the KMT government to reconsider their monolingual language policy. The PCT’s links with foreign churches has also increased participation of Taiwanese aboriginal peoples in the world indigenous movement by linking them with United Nations working groups and NGOs (Stainton 2002).

Chapter 3

Analysis of the Tao People's Anti-Nuclear Movement (TANM)

Thus far, the nuclear waste repository on Orchid Island has been defined as a colonial enterprise which has had an adverse impact Orchid Island's ecosystem and Tao culture. What has been highlighted throughout this discussion is how the Tao have felt increasingly vulnerable because of Orchid Island's colonial history and how this has been exacerbated by the nuclear waste predicament. In order to understand TANM as best as possible from within the Tao's own cultural perspective, the religious climate on Orchid Island has been described in detail. Tao indigenous religion has been identified as the primary source for TANM's conception of the environment, which sees humans as embedded in nature and participants in an interconnected ecological and cosmological system. The Presbyterian Church of Taiwan has been identified as a major supporter of the movement based on their theological commitment to matters of social justice and indigenous rights in Taiwan.

Now, upon a closer analysis of TANM we will see these multiple facets coalesce to produce an alternate environmentalism. Combining Christian and Tao religious principles, structures, and symbols, the TANM presents the Tao's environmental concerns as inseparable from related social issues. In expressing concern for Orchid Island's ecology and their physical health, the Tao people are also seeking to address related social issues such as maintaining cultural continuity, authenticating Tao tribal identity, and gaining increased political recognition as a people. They do so by employing rituals of resistance and other modes of theopolitical discourse. The following

analysis will consider the Tao's rituals of resistance in terms of their reflective, performative, and transformative functions. Following this is an analysis of the main types of political discourse employed in their struggle. By analyzing several examples of speech by Tao community members, PCT affiliates, and TANM supporters in public forums, press releases, and interviews it shall be argued that the TANM employs three primary discursive strategies: culturally constructed narratives, human rights rhetoric, and theological rationale. Combining these performative and discursive strategies has enabled TANM to develop from a grassroots initiative into a broad and multifaceted movement that has gained diverse national and international supporters.

Rituals of Resistance

On March 12, 2012 protestors gathered in Taipei to commemorate the one-year anniversary of the Japanese nuclear disaster at Fukushima and to demand the phasing out of nuclear power in Taiwan. In its report, the China Post stated, "the indigenous Dao people performed a play to symbolize getting rid of the nuclear waste or what they call 'evil spirits.'" What the Tao were in fact performing was not a play but a ritual exorcism. These ritual exorcisms have become an integral feature of the Tao's resistance strategy. Michael Rudolph who has done extensive research on public ritual displays by indigenous groups in Taiwan states "most rituals publicly performed by aboriginals today amalgamate different levels of meaning" (2008: 11). We see this in the case of TANM as the Tao's rituals of resistance hold both religious and socio-political significance.

The Tao rituals of resistance may be understood as reflective, performative, and transformative practices. The rituals are reflective because they are a means by which the

Tao remember their traditional culture and reaffirm their traditional view of the environment. In this sense such rituals ensure a degree of cultural continuity from within the group. Performatively these rituals communicate to others that the nuclear waste repository is disruptive to their interconnected cosmological and ecological world and thus threatening to their culture. These rituals are transformative practices because they are a means by which the Tao revalue and authenticate their collective identity. In this sense they serve as a political tactic and defense against colonization. They are a method through which the Tao are able to gain increased political recognition as a people and counter the hegemonic ideology that has historically oppressed them.

The ritual component of TANM is perhaps the most outstanding feature of the movement and as shown from the China Post excerpt above is sometimes misunderstood or misinterpreted. Perhaps this is due to the fact that ritual displays are not often features of environmental movements. Responding ritually to environmental crisis is not typical of the religious mainstream of the Euro-American West (Grimes 2006: 135). More often the strategy that has been actively pursued has been to formulate ethical principles and codes of moral behavior, which are then encoded into philosophies, political platforms, and legislation. However, several scholars have argued that this is insufficient because legislation alone cannot “change attitudes” and advocate that ritual may serve as an effective means to cultivate environmental sensibilities (Grimes 2006).

When the Tao perform rituals during protests they are practicing their own tradition and are remembering their ancestral and spiritual connection to the land. In this sense the rituals performed are a reflective practice. Michael Rudolph has referred to these sort of rituals as “retraditionalization rituals,” cautioning that they are “not

restricted solely to representations of the former/past but may allude to themes that have some sort of relevance in a contemporary context” (2008: 15). Traditionally, Tao’s ritual exorcisms were conducted to ward off evil ancestral spirits. Now, the ritual exorcisms are being conducted to deal with a contemporary environmental and social issue.

The Tao, now knowledgeable about the harmful properties of nuclear waste and believing it to have caused damage to their natural environment identify the repository with anito, evil spirits. Some scholars suggest that referring to the nuclear waste as anito was a strategy the younger generation Tao employed to convey the harmfulness of the nuclear waste to Tao elders, who at that time knew nothing about nuclear energy (Rudolph 2008: 43-45). In Tao traditional religious system, anito are evil non-human agents that are to be communicated with, managed, and eradicated through ritual prescription.

When the Tao perform these rituals as a form of resistance they are not inventing new rites but are appropriating their own traditional cultural symbols. These traditional ritual exorcisms include engaging in a range of aggressive bodily gestures, facial expressions, and noises, all intended to scare away malevolent beings. Using spears, making menacing gestures, shaking fists, straining neck muscles, making aggressive sounds, and singing chants are often incorporated into the ritual act. Due to the hybrid religious culture on Orchid Island these traditional rituals are also in certain instances adapted by Christianity. Sometimes church clergy perform ritual services in which anito are referred to as Satan, the power of Jesus is invoked, and a “Jesus Gospel style” exorcism is performed (Rudolph 2008: 48). However, the religious function of these

rituals remains consistent. They are performed with the intent to ward off malevolent spirits in order to maintain a cosmological balance with nature.

In this sense, ritual is a reflective act, a remembering of their traditional culture (albeit altered) during a contemporary challenge. When the Tao perform these ritual exorcisms they are embodying their own cultural beliefs. They are communicating with and trying to eradicate malevolent non-human agents for the purpose of safeguarding their natural environment in which they see themselves embedded. These rituals do not invent a new understanding of the environment but re-affirm their traditional view of nature. These ritual enactments then have the effect of ensuring a degree of cultural continuity from within the group.

However, these rituals of resistance are not being performed “behind closed doors.” These rituals are intentionally being performed in front of audiences. They have been carried out in front of the nuclear waste repository and in front of the harbor on Orchid Island. They have been performed in front of Taipower corporate offices, in front of the Taiwanese parliament buildings, and outside in the public arena in the Taipei metropolis. The fact that these rituals are intentionally performed in public suggests it is necessary to interpret and understand these rituals as performative acts.

From the perspective of performance anthropology the Tao people’s rituals of resistance may be viewed as a form of embodied communication. Michael Rudolph (2008) suggests that it is unlikely that rituals are performed publicly simply to convince others of their cosmological content. However, although the Tao are not trying to convince others to adopt a Tao cosmology, the rituals do communicate to others that it is possible to hold a worldview that differs from the dominant ideology. The Tao present

themselves as acting participants in an interconnected ecological and cosmological system during ritual enactments. When the Tao shake their fists and make menacing gestures to ward off evil spirits they articulate to others that the nuclear waste is disruptive to their interconnected ecological and cosmological system. Therefore, when the Tao perform these rituals in public they communicate to others that they perceive the nuclear waste and manage their ecosystem based on their own religious understandings. In this sense they counter the dominant ideology of the modern technocratic imagination.

Michael Rudolph states the first exorcism of evil spirits performed by the Tao for political purposes (held on February 20, 1988) occurred at a time when “consciousness about ecological limitations of one’s own life world and general thoughtfulness about alternate cultural possibilities and cosmologies were just beginning to blossom in Han dominated society” (2008: 48). He regards the first Tao ritual of resistance as revolutionary because it revealed to dominant Taiwanese society that it was possible to hold a different worldview and environmental sensibility.

Interpreting ritual in terms of its creative potential for social transformation emerged in the 1960s after the influential work of Victor Turner (1969). Turner and his students argued that ritual produced a state of liminality in which reality could be refabricated and socio-cultural change could follow. Klaus-Peter Koppling (2006) has pursued these ideas in terms of collective identity constitution and social change. He has argued that rituals may be “manipulated by political actors aiming at constructing a representation of group identity in accordance with their strategic needs” (Koppling 2006: 25). Interpreting Tao rituals of resistance in light of these considerations, it may be argued that the rituals of resistance enable the Tao to reaffirm their collective identity and

in so doing further their political interests. That is, the rituals are not merely religiously symbolic, but politically effective.

The Tao, having been subjected to colonization, having been degraded as a people, and having suffered the disintegration of their own culture, employ ritual as a means to re-value and reaffirm their unique identity. Within the ritual act the Tao themselves are responsible for their own culture's representation. They showcase unique features of their culture by dressing in traditional attire and by engaging in a wide range of symbolic gestures that carry culturally specific meanings. In doing so, they distinguish themselves from the majority Taiwanese and express the political desire to be recognized as a group with a different worldview and lifestyle but who hold the right to be respected as equal citizens.

Loa Lok Sin of the *Taipei Times* reports on February 21, 2012 as follows: "Clenching their fists as they stared straight ahead with angry faces and shouted in low-pitched voices, the Tao, in traditional dress, performed a ritual to drive away evil spirits near Longmen Harbor." The accompanying photograph captures a group of men with firm faces dressed in traditional attire and holding spears. The Tao continue to pursue rituals of resistance as an effective strategy to address environmental and related social issues. Through the ritual enactment they have been able to pursue cultural continuity, authenticate Tao collective identity, and petition for increased political power and autonomy.

The Tao are not the only group in Taiwan, which has pursued ritual as an effective political strategy. Since the lifting of martial law and the rise of the nativist movement, indigenous and marginalized groups in Taiwan have all found ritual an

effective means to pursue social change. Michael Rudolph suggests that the Tao's use of ritual in TANM was revolutionary in this respect as it inspired educated aboriginal elites to manipulate their traditional cultural systems in order to manufacture their own political campaigns. He states: "Tao made the young intellectuals realize that a paramount technique for guaranteeing efficacy for aboriginal representation in Taiwanese society was to allude to aboriginal religious traditions, an aspect of these traditions that could best be illustrated in ritual performance" (2008: 47).

Rhetorics of Resistance

Members of TANM also protest the waste by speaking out at conferences, at forums, to news agencies, in public declarations and in letters addressing Taipower executives and government officials. In doing so they continue to express the nuclear waste as both a cultural and environmental concern. When the Tao community, church members, and supporters speak out against the nuclear waste repository they are communicating many of the same issues that rituals of resistance address, such as cultural continuity, authenticating Tao tribal identity, and gaining increased political recognition whilst highlighting the threat the waste poses to their environment and physical health.

Those who are vocal in the movement employ three primary discursive strategies. For one, TANM supporters often construct cultural narratives that contain temporal references to either a glorified past and/or an ambiguous future. Another strategy has been the use of human rights language. Often the waste is articulated as a colonial threat, as an existential threat, and as a crime against humanity. Other times more moderate human rights language is used to define the waste as an infringement of a fundamental

right. With regards to the PCT such human rights rhetoric is typically accompanied or backed by theological reasoning. This is similar to what was observed with the land rights and indigenous language movements of the 1990s.

One might, after considering these three variant discursive strategies, note that there are inherent ideological differences between them. For instance, human rights are premised on the Western notion of the free and autonomous individual abstracted from his social and ecological environment, whereas Tao cultural narratives present humans as inextricably embedded in nature. However, it may be argued that these variant discursive strategies have served to strengthen the movement rather than weaken it. They serve the shared purpose of convincing others the nuclear repository is a social justice breach and environmental threat; however, each narrative resonates more with different audiences. For instance, evoking cultural symbols and shared memories may be more effective in uniting the Tao to band together in the anti-nuclear movement. Human rights language may be particularly useful in conveying the harm done by the nuclear repository to broader national and international audiences not attuned to Tao culture. A Biblical rationale is of course especially relevant to the many Christians supporting the movement, and motivates their continued involvement. These three discursive strategies collectively articulate an alternate environmentalism that seeks to connect environmental issues and social justice matters.

1. Culturally Constructed Narratives

Jackson Hu has argued that the Tao's nostalgia for "the past landscape and ecological oral narrative is a recent construct of cultural discourse in response to government displacement projects" (2008c: 187). This culturally constructed narrative is

also being employed to address the nuclear waste predicament. The Tao often make temporal references and appropriate their own cultural symbols to construct a cultural narrative that expresses their negative view of the nuclear waste. Some nostalgically describe the peaceful lives their ancestors once enjoyed and Orchid Island's once rich ecological fertility; others express concerns about an ambiguous or grim future. What this sort of narrative seeks to achieve is a degree of cultural continuity for the Tao. It expresses their historical imagination of Orchid Island and their desire to maintain this connection.

One example of a culturally constructed discourse may be found through considering a group of Tao elders who in January 2003 stood on the grasslands in front of the nuclear waste site and reclaimed *Ji-Miramay* (the field in front of the site) as their ancestral place for taro and grass farming. They chanted to bring back "fertile groves and rich ecology with abundant plants and animals of their past" (Hu 2008: 187). Recall that for the Tao, a rich ecology signifies a healthy cultural and spiritual life. Therefore, chanting for the restoration of Orchid Island's environment also expresses the Tao people's desire to return to a time when they believe they were culturally and spiritually fulfilled.

A more contemporary example of a nostalgic cultural reference may be found at a meeting held on February 20, 2012. Reporting on the event for WFN, Lydia Ma stated that the Tao indigenous community declared that they did not want their "ancestral lands" to be used as a nuclear storage facility. This reference to the land as ancestral is often used. One could simply interpret the word ancestral here to denote the place where someone or their ancestors were born. However, in acknowledging Tao cosmology

“ancestral” may also be understood as an expression of the Tao’s religious understanding of human-land relations. For the Tao, ancestral spirits embody the land and are active agents in their cosmological system. The nuclear waste has disrupted this felt connection to the land. Therefore, the Tao engage in a nostalgic remembering. It is a wish to reclaim Orchid Island as their sacred place. As one Tao put it: “This is our place. Some elderly people say, ‘a fallen leaf will return into the root’ The place they are born is the place they will die” (Fan 2006: 421).

TANM supporters often make references to an ambiguous or grim future. A creative example of this kind of narrative may be found in the following poem that was written by Syaman Rapongan, a writer and native Orchid Islander:

Wild Savages, here’s your breakfast
Cobalt 60 is for the men
Cesium 137 is for the women
As for the kids extinction is your breakfast
(Taipei Times, December 21, 2011).

This is a powerful statement. To begin with use of the first two words “wild savages” is an explicit way to describe the nuclear waste repository as a colonial project. The author is implying that Taipower and the Taiwanese government do not view the Tao as people or equal citizens. This has the effect of immediately contextualizing the nuclear waste issue as a social justice matter. Secondly, the line “as for the kids extinction is your breakfast” is a temporal reference to a lack of a future. An ambiguous or non-existent future is a prevalent theme in TANM rhetoric. The words “extinction,” “annihilation,” and “genocide” of the tribe are popularly used within such discourse. This sort of language may be understood in two regards. For one these words denote a physical death and convey the Tao’s concern for their physical health and wellbeing. However, another

way to interpret this language is that such words are also being used to denote a spiritual or cultural death of the tribe. When the Tao use words such as these they are concerned with the collective health of the community and the well being of generations to come. They wish to ensure that their unique culture and heritage will be preserved in the future.

2. Human Rights Rhetoric

Another way TANM is protesting the nuclear waste repository and shedding light on relevant social justice issues is through the use of human rights rhetoric. Broadly defined, human rights are understood to be universal human values that safeguard against injustice. They are inalienable, egalitarian, and intended to protect human life and dignity. Since human rights are directly concerned with matters of social justice, through employing this rhetoric TANM immediately contextualizes their environmental crisis as a social justice matter. Since human rights are intended to be egalitarian, this language is also effectively used to underscore the discrimination the Tao community has faced historically and to communicate the adverse affects of colonization.

Often when this approach is pursued the Tao do not specify a given right but simply use the words “fundamental right” in a general sense. For example, Reverend Shiyman Faeien at the Third No Nukes Asia Forum spoke out against the nuclear waste repository as well as Orchid Island’s history of colonization. He framed the Taiwan government’s actions as “inhumane policies” and “infringements of human rights.” He argued, “The Taiwan Government’s contemptuous misconduct and malicious behavior towards the Yami people seriously infringe human rights and should be condemned by the international community” (<http://guhy.csie.ntust.edu.tw/lanyu/english.html>).

Perhaps the reason why TANM uses the word fundamental right in a general sense is because there is no consensus on whether the right to a healthy environment exists. Malgosia Fitzmaurice (1999) identifies three streams of thought that respond to this question. One stream argues that no human right is able to exist without the environment. The second stream of thought argues that there is already an existing or emerging right to a healthy environment. The last school of thought identified argues that there is such a right based on other human rights such as the right to life and the right to information.

Despite this ambiguity, there seems to be a growing effort among scholars and political activists to draw a connection between human rights and environmental sustainability. Certain International Declarations draw this connection. For instance the Stockholm Declaration implies basic environmental health is necessary for the free enjoyment of human rights. Also, the 1992 Rio De Janeiro Declaration states human beings are “entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature” (<http://www.unep.org>). There also seems to be a growing effort to connect environmental health with human rights among NGOs. For example, the anti-nuclear NGO *Beyond Nuclear* states explicitly in their website that the nuclear power industry “inevitably violates human rights” (<http://www.beyondnuclear.org>). Therefore TANM in appropriating general human rights language is able to communicate more effectively with those attuned to such language and gain international supporters. For instance, WISE, grass roots anti-nuclear NGO has come to support TANM and frames the nuclear predicament in human rights language. Their web page dedicated to the Tao’s anti-

nuclear battle states “The Yami people opposed to the nuclear waste site claim that it is an infringement on their rights and their way of life” (Marsh et al. 1993).

3. Theological Interpretation

The final discursive strategy employed is theological. PCT is strongly committed to TANM because of their theological conviction that the integrity of nature should be protected and human beings are equal in God’s image. The PCT sent out an anti-nuclear declaration in 1992 in support of the Tao. It is a declaration that affirms their antinuclear stance and desire for Taiwan to phase out nuclear energy. The PCT’s 1992 Anti-Nuclear Declaration states that the government has ignored the Tao people and that this is against humanitarian principles. The PCT’s 1992 Anti-nuclear Declaration is perhaps the best example of PCT’s theological discourse applied to support principles of eco-justice and begins:

We firmly believe that the whole universe is the creation of God and that humankind is called to protect the integrity and harmony of the whole natural order. Therefore, we need to change our present human-centered behavior, allow nature to be self-sustaining, and so insure the ongoing welfare of succeeding generations.
(<http://www.taiwandocuments.org/pct08.htm>).

The declaration ends with an excerpt from I Corinthians: “The world and all that is in it belong to the Lord, the Earth and all that live on it are his” (I Cor. 4:2).

This document calls Christians to respect the beauty and integrity of nature because God has created it; in doing so they must reject nuclear power because it compromises God’s glorious creation. The PCT’s stance on nuclear power may be regarded as embodied theology, in which God’s glory is seen everywhere and within everything and everyone. This theological rationale promotes a valuing of the natural environment and human life and thus enables the PCT to emphasize both the social and

environmental grievances brought forth by the Tao community. In theological fashion the PCT advocates in favor of just sustainability.

Eco-justice has become an increasing global trend among Christian groups. For instance, the Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation program of the World Council of Churches of Christ has organized conferences, study trips, statements, and impetus for change in the direction of just sustainability. Wright (2011: 179) writes, “The churches have become eco-justice advocates based on the conviction of the integrity of creation, responsibility to steward god’s creation, and the conviction that justice, peace, and environmental protection are linked.” This quotation matches the PCT stance on nuclear power and their embodied theology. The PCT thus fits into a burgeoning global trend among Christian groups to promote just sustainability.

The PCT’s theology has also resonated with certain Christian Tao community members. Mei-Fang Fan who has conducted interviews regarding disparate views on nuclear waste within the Tao community noted that within the fisherman and housewife focus groups some respondents expressed the belief that “God created the Yami tribe and they regarded themselves as the stewards of Orchid Island” (2006: 422). They expressed that it was their duty to stay on the island and maintain its ecological health. PCT’s embodied theology then seems to resonate both with the local community and global Christian audience.

Success of the Movement

TANM’s rhetorics and rituals of resistance are informed by and supported by the hybrid religious culture on Orchid Island. Drawing on PCT theology and Tao traditional culture

TANM presents the nuclear waste repository as both an environmental and a socio-political problem. The movement began as a grass roots movement that now has national and global supporters. Their strategy has proven successful primarily because it has been informed and supported by their religious traditions. For instance, Tao traditional religion helped unify young and old from across seven villages to begin a grass roots movement on Orchid Island. Rudolph (2008: 45) reports that the first ritual exorcisms “lead to a coming together of old and young people in a unified Christianized Tao identity vis-à-vis Taiwan’s Han and Taiwan’s global economy.” Evoking traditional cultural memories proved an effective strategy to unite Tao from the seven communal villages and also provided the Tao with a renewed pride in their culture.

The PCT has played a considerable role in strengthening TANM through the voices of its active members and through linking TANM with other NGOs through its global network. PCT members have facilitated protests, forums, made personal appeals to the legislature and enshrined declarations. For example, during Chinese New Year of 1991, WISE reported that the nuclear situation on Orchid Island gained widespread international attention when,

[l]ed by Kuo Jian-Ping, a Yami Presbyterian missionary, and with the support of anti-nuclear groups in Taiwan like the Environmental Protection Union and the Green Association, the Yami anti-nuclear group held demonstrations on Orchid Island and in Taipei, where they carried a protest letter straight to the Taiwan Power Company. (Marsh et al. 1993)

Ministers and church officials speak out at international conferences and venues. For instance, in the speech given by Reverend Shiyman Feaien at the Third No-Nukes Asia forum he urged the international community to write letters of appeal to the Taiwanese legislature. Another example would be Reverend Chang Haiyu who spoke out

against the nuclear waste during a press conference at the Legislative Yuan on March 1, 2012. The DPP, TSU, Green Party officials, as well as scholars, youth, and representatives from women's rights groups were present. Church leaders have also sent out independent medical reports. In 2000 the church on the island counted over fifty congenitally deformed babies and released these numbers to media streams (Arrigo et al. 2002: 4).

Together, the TANM's rituals of resistance and variant discursive strategies have strengthened the movement and have afforded the Tao people increased political recognition at both the national and international level. This may be evidenced by the fact that of late the Tao have been able to draw national and international attention towards Taiwan's nuclear regime. For instance, on December 2, 2011 the *Taipei Times* published an editorial entitled "Living in a Nuclear Waste Land." The editor, referring to the nuclear waste predicament on Orchid Island and TANM wrote, "This nuclear contamination has wider ramifications for the presidential elections with the Democratic Progressive Party candidate Tsai Ing-Wen espousing a policy of phasing out nuclear power in Taiwan. ... The Kuomintang President Ma Ying-Jeou insisting on maintaining it." Although Tsai was unsuccessful in her bid to become Taiwan's president, TANM's continued protests and appeals undoubtedly helped make Taiwan's nuclear energy regime an important consideration during Taiwan's presidential elections in 2012.

In terms of TANM's international success, this year's annual Global Greens Congress marked a momentous occasion. Taiwan is a member of the Global Greens Network, which was founded in 2001 in Canberra, Australia to bring together Green parties from around the world. A congress is held every four years. This year over ninety

countries came together for the occasion. Three members from the Tao people represented Taiwan. They carried Zero signs and spoke on behalf of indigenous people's determination to oppose nuclear power. The conference adopted a Taiwan-proposed resolution for a multinational indigenous network, which made reference to the Tao as an example of indigenous communities whose cultures and environments have been negatively affected by the nuclear industry. The resolution states, "The systems of ecological knowledge and practices created by the global indigenous community are keys to preserving the peaceful coexistence between humans and Mother Nature" (<http://www.globalgreens.org>). This statement is especially significant because it acknowledges an indigenous worldview and endorses respect for traditional ecological knowledge and practices. In all these regards TANM has made serious headway.

Chapter 4

Conclusions

Why is the nuclear waste situation on Orchid Island and TANM of any significance in terms of broader Taiwanese and global environmental discourse? TANM is of importance because the movement articulates an environmentalism that differs from the dominant environmental paradigm in Taiwan and offers a view of nature that counters mainstream Euro-American thinking. Robert Weller (2006) provides a detailed account of environmental ethics in Chinese culture (including Taiwan) in his book *Discovering Nature*. He points out that although the Chinese have their own indigenous cultural resources for thinking about the environment (such as Buddhism and the Confucian anthropocosmic worldview), as elsewhere around the globe, Euro-American discourse has heavily influenced Chinese thinking on nature. In particular, Weller argues that beginning in the nineteenth century Chinese culture adopted three streams of thought from Euro-American discourse that proved to be very influential within their respective societies.

The first stream of thought derived from the scientific revolution and the “technological dream of human mastery of nature.” This view sees nature as an “object for human use” and became popular in Taiwan during their period of rapid economic growth and industrialization in the second half of the twentieth century. The second stream of thought articulated by Romantic thinkers such as Thoreau and Emerson expresses the intrinsic value of nature. This school of thought became popular in the 1960s when the Taiwanese began to take interest in nature reserves, bird watching, and

eco-tourism. The idea that nature holds intrinsic value continues to feed preservationist and conservationist trends in Taiwanese policy making.

The third stream Weller defines as the “pastoral image of nature” which envisions a tamed landscape and human contentment, an idealized rural life. This stream of thought grew out of real experience with the land and farming culture in Taiwan in as much from Euro-American influences. Weller regards this view as a compromise where “people live in happy equilibrium with nature” (2006: 57). All three streams of thought essentially operate within the same paradigm, in which nature is envisioned as something separate from human beings. This twentieth-century environmental consciousness has become the predominant way of thinking in global environmental discourse.

What Weller sought to locate in his study was an alternative (Chinese) environmentalism fit to compete with the global discourse he described. He proposed the following definition of globalization in his search: “an interaction of multiple locals and globals remixed and recreated at various crucial nodes and at different scales” (168). A definition of globalization such as this, he states, opens up the possibility for “indigenous categories of knowledge” to “reshape globalizing culture” (7). Weller looked to environmentally conscious NGOs, government policies, protest movements, as well as interviews conducted with eco-tourists in an effort to locate an alternative environmental ethic. In the end he concluded, “Not all nodes are created equal, however, and there is little to compete with the dominant global discourse” (168).

What makes TANM especially significant is that it counters Weller’s findings. Working from Weller’s nodal definition of globalization, Orchid Island may be regarded as a crucial node in which multiple globals and locals have interacted. Globals came in

the form of missionary Christianity, Japanese and Chinese colonialisms, NGOs, and other globalizing influences, which have all interacted with the local Tao indigenous culture. What has been “remixed” is indeed an alternate environmentalism (although not Chinese) which is currently seen to be competing with the dominant environmental paradigm.

TANM may be viewed as an alternate environmentalism because it counters the dichotomous understanding of the environment derived from Euro-American thinking. TANM presents a view of the environment in which humans are embedded within it. TANM draws a connection between ecological degradation, cultural dissolution, and social injustice. This integrated approach to environment and society can be contrasted with mainstream 20th century environmentalism, which largely views environmental issues as a problem for science and technology rather than social policy and culture.

TANM’s alternate environmentalism is resonating at home and abroad. The Tao have gained increased political recognition from the Taiwanese populace and politicians. TAMN has taken the international stage and is now corroborating with Green parties, NGOs, and other indigenous groups for shared purposes. TANM has not restricted their concerns to Orchid Island’s individualized situation although this remains the primary concern but has widened and now feeds into broader Taiwanese and global indigenous anti-nuclear campaigns.

As TANM competes with the dominant environmental paradigm in Taiwan it aligns with another global movement, which is also challenging 20th century environmental consciousness: the Just Sustainability Movement (JSM). The Just Sustainability Movement is diverse and difficult to define; however, in general it may be regarded as a broad based loosely linked movement that seeks to unify environmental

sustainability and social justice. It is a movement that recognizes it is typically the socio-economically disadvantaged or racial minorities who bear the burdens of the environmental crisis brought on by poor environmental management.

The Just Sustainability Movement, although having counterparts in other areas around the globe, is widely recognized to have evolved in the United States in the 1980s. Marginalized residents from low-income neighborhoods in the United States began to protest against having to live next to dump and waste sites. In 1987 the United Church of Christ's Commission for Racial Justice conducted a broad study concluding that 87 per cent of distribution of environmental hazards revealed racial disparities (Cox 2010: 63). In 1991 delegates from local communities along with national leaders of civil rights movements, religious leaders, and environmental groups convened in Washington DC for the first People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit. There, they determined the environment signifies a wide range of concerns and that the environment should be conceived as a place where people "live, work, and play." In stating that the environment signifies a wide range of concerns the Summit opened up the possibility to connect environmental problems with social issues. In defining the environment as a place where "people live, work, and play" the Summit outlined a more holistic view of the environment. Here, human beings are no longer abstracted from their natural surroundings. Although significantly different from TANM's religious understanding of the environment, it expresses something fundamentally akin, that humans have a place therein.

Robert Cox (2010: 38) defines JSM as "efforts to fuse concerns for environmental sustainability and issues of race, class, gender, social justice to ensure a just and

sustainable future for all.” He provides a framework for the Just Sustainability Movement. He argues the movement first seeks to point out that typically most marginalized segments of a population are victimized by having to bear the brunt of poor environmental policies. Secondly, the movement seeks to create more inclusive opportunities for those who are most affected by environmental decisions to be heard by the public agencies who make them. Lastly, the movement envisions environmentally healthy and economically sustainable communities (2010: 264).

TANM displays all these fundamental features. TANM points out the Tao as a marginalized community victimized by Taiwan’s poor environmental policies by framing the nuclear situation as internal colonization. TANM also seeks to create more inclusive opportunities for the Tao who have been negatively affected by environmental decisions outside their control. One of TANM’s primary complaints is that the Tao were completely left out of the decision-making process when the nuclear waste repository plans were being made. TANM has also argued against the unjust fact it is the Tao who bear the nuclear burden although they have no say in nuclear policy making (Fan 2006: 426). TANM has made demands for both democratic procedural reform and autonomy to redress these injustices. Lastly, TANM envisions an environmentally healthy and economically sustainable community in the future: a future in which the Tao maintain their sacred relationship with their ancestral land on an unpolluted Orchid Island.

TANM may therefore be understood as part of or connected to the broader JSM. The JSM in fact has gained its prominence because of grassroots movements exactly like TANM. Due to the combined efforts of multiple grass roots activists, ideas of sustainability and justice are now being used to influence policy change at the global

level. For instance, the Earth Charter (2000) stresses linkages between justice and environmental sustainability. Just sustainability is also gaining prominence among civil organizations so much so that some have come to regard it as the largest movement mankind has ever seen (Hawkins 2007).

Some regard the JSM as the direction environmentalism inevitably needs to take in the future. Agyeman and Bullard (2003) regard just sustainability as a necessary change to our thinking about the environment. They write, “In recent years it has become increasingly apparent that the issue of environmental quality is inextricably linked to that of human equality. Wherever in the world environmental despoliation and degradation is happening, it is almost always linked to questions of social justice, equity rights, and people’s quality of life in its widest sense” (2003: 1). As more groups, like the Tao, disenfranchised by faulty environmental policies or practices, emerge on the international stage to express their grievances, the assertion that environmental quality and human equality are inextricably linked becomes undeniable. TANM and the Tao case also illustrate that Just Sustainability may take various forms, may be culturally relative, and may be expressed in narratives that differ from global discourse. As a result Just Sustainability may be actualized differently within variant social settings. Religious resources may be employed to construct these alternate environmentalisms and religious institutions (such as the PCT) may be utilized to propagate these environmentalisms in a globalizing world. It may then be necessary for governing bodies and global institutions to become more engaged with local communities, more attuned to various worldviews, and more understanding of cultural differences if we wish to pursue a just and sustainable future for all.

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