Taiwan's Imagined Geography

Chinese Colonial Travel Writing and Pictures, 1683–1895

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Published by the Harvard University Asia Center
Distributed by Harvard University Press
Cambridge (Massachusetts) and London, 2004

CHAPTER 2

Taiwan as a Living Museum

Savagery and Tropes of Anachronism

Strange indeed, these Eastern Savages! The island is so close that if one sets out sailing with a northerly wind from a harbor such as Lieyu, one can reach the Pescadores in one day and night, and then in another day and night one can reach [Mu]Jialaowan. Yet, here there are still people who do not have a calendar, who do not have officials and superiors, who go about naked, and who use a knotted string for calculations. Is that not strange?

— Chen Di, *Record of the Eastern Savages*

Late Ming traveler Chen Di (1540–1617), author of the earliest extant eyewitness account of Taiwan, expressed surprise that only a short distance from China's shores was an island so culturally and technologically remote from Chinese civilization. He figured this cultural difference in terms of temporal distance, as though the "Eastern Savages" (*dongfan*), as he dubbed Taiwan's indigenous inhabitants, remained stuck in the past, in a time before the invention of calendars, clothing, writing, and other accoutrements of civilization. Following Chen Di, Qing travel writers commonly constructed the Taiwan indigenes as anachronous beings. They represented what might be termed "primitive" customs—for example, tattooing and the wearing of animal skins—as analogues of practices recorded in such ancient texts as the *Records of the Grand Historian* (*Shiji*) and the *Book of Rites* (*Liji*). For Qing writers, Taiwan was a living museum where they could observe customs long ago abandoned in China.

The use of historical analogy to explain seemingly strange and alien cultural practices was a common feature of late imperial ethnographic descriptions of non-Han peoples on the Chinese frontiers.[1] The idea that the barbarians preserved customs or practices once found in China dates to early texts such as the *Chronicle of Zuo* (*Zuozhuan*), the *Records of the Grand Historian*, and the *History of the Later Han* (*Hou Hanshu*). By the late imperial era, this notion had become an established historiographic convention.[2] For Chinese writers like Chen Di, the comparison of frontier peoples to the ancients was an effective way of representing their crudeness or primitiveness. This projection of cultural "others" into the past bears a striking similarity to the use of temporal displacement in Western anthropological discourse. As Johannes Fabian demonstrates in *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object*, in traditional Western ethnography the "denial of coevalness," or a distancing in time, is a central mode of constituting people as primitives:[3] using a scale of evolutionary development, ethnographers represent their subjects as "backward" relative to modern Western civilization and thereby relegate them to the past. The denial of coevalness, according to Fabian, serves primarily to distance the observed from the observer.

In an analysis of premodern Chinese, Western, and Chinese Communist representations of non-Han peoples on the Chinese frontiers, anthropologist Stevan Harrell identifies the denial of coevalness (which he calls the "historical metaphor") as a shared feature of all three discourses.[4] He argues that the construction of "peripheral peoples" as ancient serves to demonstrate their cultural inferiority and to legitimate the civilizing project of the hegemonic "center."[5] The historical metaphor legitimates the civilizing project by establishing that peripheral peoples can indeed be civilized: if peripheral peoples represent an earlier stage of development, one that the civilizers themselves once went through, then the project of civilization is simply a matter of bringing these peoples forward in time. Harrell asserts that it is by means of such discursive strategies that the center "assumes the task of civilizing, and with it the superior political and moral position from which the civilizing project can be carried out."[6] In short, the historical metaphor is essentially a tool of denigration.

This chapter examines the ways in which Taiwan functioned as a living museum in Chinese travel accounts from the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. As we shall see, travel writers used the

historical metaphor not only to denigrate the "savages" but also to idealize them. The historical metaphor served two contradictory rhetorical modes—which I call the "rhetoric of privation" and the "rhetoric of primitivism."[7] With the "rhetoric of privation," the savage is constructed as backward and culturally inferior. With the "rhetoric of primitivism," the savage is romanticized as the preserver of an ancient righteousness lost among the moderns—a "Noble Savage" of sorts.

Although both forms of rhetoric rely on the denial of coevalness, they represent conflicting conceptions of history. The rhetoric of privation derives from the view of history as progress, a movement away from the brutish original condition of humanity, and a cumulative development of civilization. This view was particularly prevalent in expansionist eras such as the Tang and the Qing, which sought to surpass the achievements of past dynasties. The rhetoric of primitivism, in contrast, derives from the notion of history as a process of degeneration from an idealized past, a notion that can be found in both Confucian and Daoist schools of thought. As early as the Warring States period, Confucians constructed the early Zhou as a Golden Age of perfect virtue. Daoist classics, such as the *Laozi* and the *Zhuangzi*, advocated a return to a primordial era of natural simplicity. The rhetorical effect of displacing the other into the past thus varies depending on which past—a brutish one or an exemplary one—is the point of reference.[8] As a result, a bifurcated image of the Taiwan indigene as savage brute and noble savage emerged in late imperial travel writing. Thus, the historical metaphor was not used solely as an ideological justification of Qing colonial dominance in Taiwan but also as a means of critiquing Han Chinese exploitation of the indigenes.

Chen Di and the Rhetoric of Primitivism

The basic model for the rhetoric of primitivism in Taiwan travel writing was established by Chen Di's *Record of the Eastern Savages* (*Dongfan ji*), one of the most celebrated premodern accounts of the island. One of the few Chinese literati to travel to Taiwan before the Qing conquest, Chen Di made his voyage to the island in 1603 as a companion of Admiral Shen Yourong, who was leading a punitive expedition against Japanese pirates based on the island. Although Chen Di had been involved in frontier defense before his retirement, he did not participate in this campaign but simply went along as an observer because he had a "taste to see the sea."[9] During his twenty-two-day stay on the island, Chen Di covered the terrain from Tainan along the southwest coast to Kaohsiung.[10] After returning to China, Chen composed the *Record*, a report of his observations of indigenous culture on the island. Although Taiwan was inhabited at this time by several different groups, Chen Di was not fully cognizant of this diversity and thus spoke of the indigenes generically as the "Eastern Savages."

Chen Di's account exemplifies how the rhetoric of privation and primitivism expressed Chinese ambivalence toward the Taiwan indigenes. Chen began with images of indigenous privation: the people wear no clothing; they lack the ritual etiquette of bowing and kneeling; they have no calendar, no writing. In Chen's view, the indigenes thus lacked the very basic elements of civilization: *wen* (writing and texts), *shi* (history—without a calendar to mark time, there can be no history), and *li* (ritual or propriety). Through these images of privation, Chen underscored the indigenes' cultural inferiority in relation to the Chinese.

Chen complicated these images in a comment that serves as a final evaluation of indigenous culture. In this longish passage, Chen mused on what he saw as the "strangeness" (*yi*) of the indigenes. He constructed this strangeness in large part by denying the coevalness of the indigenes. Styling himself the "unofficial historian" (*yeshi shi*), Chen wrote:

> The Unofficial Historian says: Strange indeed, these Eastern Savages! . . . Here there are still people who do not have a calendar, who do not have officials and superiors, who go about naked, and who use a knotted string for calculations. Is that not strange? . . . Also, they live on an ocean [island], yet they do not fish. They live unsegregated and yet are not promiscuous. They bury the dead in the same place where the living dwell. They hunt deer the entire year, and yet the deer have not been exterminated. If you counted all their islands together, the terrain would be equivalent to about one county. They reproduce among themselves. To this day they have no calendrical system, nor any writing system, and they do not feel the lack. Is that not strange? The Southern Dwarves and Northern Barbarians all have writing systems, similar to the "bird tracks" of the ancient *zhuan* script; must there not have been a clever person at the beginning who established [this system]? And this place alone lacks writing; why is that? But they eat their fill and amuse themselves, happy and contented; what use would they have for clever people? They are the people of Lord No-Cares (Wuhuai shi) and Getian.[11]

The ambiguity of history, as both progress and degeneration, allows Chen Di to move smoothly from privation to primitivism in this passage. His ambivalence toward the past emerges most sharply in his discussion of writing and its relationship to civilization. Chen Di took the absence of writing among the indigenes as an index of both their technological backwardness and their primitive virtue. On the one hand, Chen marveled that the indigenes still used knotted strings for calculations, a practice regarded by the Chinese as a form of proto-writing.[12] He was astonished that the Taiwan indigenes alone among the barbarians had no writing system. They thus appeared to him even more backward than the Southern Dwarves and Northern Barbarians, who at least possess the archaic writing system known as *zhuan*. On the other hand, the practice of knotting strings and the lack of writing prompted Chen to figure the indigenes as the people of Lord No-Cares and Getian, legendary rulers of a primordial era of peace and natural simplicity, since he associated their "preliterate" state with a contented and carefree existence. In a typically primitivist move, Chen Di turned privation on its head and refigured a lack of technological development as a positive sign of the indigenes' moral condition.

Chen was able to achieve this reversal because writing functions as both a sign of progress and a sign of loss. The centrality of writing to Chinese civilization dates to the earliest times of the Shang and the Zhou. Early myths held that the sage-kings Fu Xi and Huang Di invented writing and gave it to the Chinese people in order that they might be civilized. The possession of writing distinguished those who were civilized from the barbarians, who were not privy to the teachings of the sage-kings. By at least the Warring States period, as Mark Edward Lewis demonstrates in *Writing and Authority in Early China*, writing and texts had become fundamental to cultural and state authority.[13] Therefore, the lack of writing could readily be made to stand for the antithesis of civilization and centrist state authority. According to Daoist critiques of the complexities of civilization, the invention of writing spelled the end of a simpler, natural age. Both the *Laozi* and the *Zhuangzi* called for a return to a way of life that antedated the invention of writing, when people used knotted strings for calculations and record keeping. It is this association of "knotted strings" with Daoist images of a primitive utopia that enabled Chen Di to read the practice as a sign of the indigenes' simple virtues, rather

than as mere index of technological backwardness. The simple life is described thus in the *Laozi*:

> Make the state small and its people few.
> Let the people give up use of their tools.
> Let them take death seriously and desist from
> distant campaigns.
> Then even if they have boats and wagons, they
> will not travel in them.
> Even though they have weapons and armor, they
> will not form ranks with them.
> Let people revert to the practice of rope-tying
> [instead of writing].
> Then they will find their food sweet,
> Their clothes beautiful,
> Their houses comfortable,
> Their customs enjoyable.

People from neighboring states so close that they can see each other and hear the sounds of each other's dogs and chickens will then grow old without ever visiting each other.[14]

This description of a Golden Age represents a vital Daoist critique of the competition, striving, and greed associated with civilization and progress.[15] An alternative to this life is presented in the form of the idealized small state. Chen Di repeatedly alluded to this passage from the *Laozi* in his account: he described Taiwan as small and the villages as isolated; the people do not use boats to travel on the ocean, and they still knot strings. The main body of his text concludes: "Therefore, until old age and death they have no contact with other barbarians."[16] Chen, it seems, fancied that on Taiwan he had found a primitive community matching the Daoist ideal. Sadly, he saw the modern world intruding on this utopia: "Since communication has been established with China, they have begun to have desires, and unscrupulous people cheat them with inferior goods. They are also gradually becoming aware [of the ways of the world], and I am afraid that their days of pure simplicity are ending."[17] For Chen Di the establishment of communications with China represents a rupture with the indigenes' original state of isolation and innocence.

Chen Di's construction of the indigenes as a people free from both worldly desires and knowledge again draws on the *Laozi*, this time a passage on ideal governance:

Do not honor the worthy,
And the people will not compete.
Do not value rare treasures,
And the people will not steal.
Do not display what others want,
And the people will not have their hearts confused.
A sage governs this way;
He empties people's minds and fills their bellies.
He weakens their wills and strengthens their bones.
Keep the people always without knowledge and without desires,
For then the clever will not dare to act.
Engage in no action and order will prevail.[18]

This passage from the *Laozi*, like the one on "knotted strings," serves as an important source for primitivist tropes. Chen Di not only constructed the Taiwan indigenes as a people with neither knowledge nor desires but also represented them as a people with "full bellies" who have no need for "clever people." He further claimed that the people of Taiwan do not steal, a claim repeated by numerous other Chinese travelers to Taiwan. His *Record* is so replete with allusion to the *Laozi* that one might almost read it as a gloss on this classic text.

The *Laozi* was not Chen Di's only source for images of primitivism. Tao Qian's "Account of Peach Blossom Spring" ("Taohuayuan ji"), a text that is itself a rearticulation of the Daoist discourse on primitivism, also influenced Chen. Tao Qian's famous account tells of a mythical hidden refuge at Wuling, where people who had fled the oppressive Qin rule lived in a timeless utopian world. Oblivious to the passage of time and the changing of dynasties, the residents of this refuge preserved ancient customs intact. Tao described this idyllic primitive realm as a world that had no calendars, where planting instead followed the natural rhythm of the seasons. Dogs and chickens could be heard calling to one another, but roads were so overgrown that neighbors never visited one another. The villagers enjoyed a carefree existence and felt no need to exert their intellect. There is some speculation that Tao's account may have been based on non-Han tribal peoples of southern China.[19] Late imperial readers of *Record* certainly would have sensed echoes of Tao Qian's Peach Blossom Spring in Chen Di's representation of primitive Taiwan.

A reading of Chen Di's *Record* against the *Laozi* and "Peach Blossom Spring" demonstrates that the rhetoric of primitivism was

grounded in Daoist critiques of Chinese civilization and the centrist state. As is evident in Chen Di's comment, primitivism served as a ready vehicle for self-reflexive critiques of Chinese society. Chen explicitly contrasted the virtuous and innocent primitives with unscrupulous Chinese traders, who cheat the naïve indigenes with inferior goods. With the introduction of these goods also comes the introduction of desire and knowledge; China therefore becomes a source of corruption, a threat to the primitives' idyllic way of life. Chen's *Record*, like much travel literature in general, serves as a vehicle for the author's reflections on his own society. Representations of the Taiwan indigenes, then, might have more to do with a traveler's dissatisfaction with Chinese society than with his actual perceptions of indigenous society. Chen's romanticization of the primitives expresses an anxiety that material advancement might paradoxically bring moral decline.

Between Chen Di's time and the Qing conquest, there seem to have been no firsthand Chinese accounts of the Taiwan indigenes, a lack that even Qing authors found mysterious. Early Qing travelers to Taiwan, who recognized Chen Di as the "first" Chinese literatus to write an account of the island, took him as an important model. Chen Di was, of course, positioned differently from these Qing literati, since he traveled to Taiwan before the Qing colonized the island. He therefore had no need to deal with the issues of colonial relations that would confront Qing authors. Nonetheless, as a central early text, the *Record* set out some of the basic terms in which Qing literati would understand the Taiwan indigenes, as well as the relation between indigenous culture and Chinese civilization.[20] According to Jia Ning, Chen Di was the first to label Taiwan's tribal villages "she," which would become the standard Qing term. He was also the first to name the Taiwan indigenes the "Eastern Savages" (*dongfan*) or "Barbarians of Eastern Savagery" (*dongfan zhi yi*).[21]

In doing so, Chen associated the Taiwan indigenes with the Eastern Barbarians (*dongyi*), a category that included the Koreans and the Japanese. This is significant because historically, for geographic reasons, Chinese expansion to the east had been limited in comparison, for example, to the historical expansion southward.[22] Although numerous non-Han Chinese peoples of the south had been conquered and gradually absorbed into the Chinese empire over the centuries, the Eastern Barbarians had for the most part maintained the more autonomous relationship of "tributaries" to China. Certain other pre-

suppositions also followed from the categorization of the Taiwan indigenes as Eastern Barbarians: the classic characterization of this group in the *Book of Rites* was that "they had their hair unbound and tattooed their bodies. Some of them ate their food without its being cooked with fire."[23] These images greatly informed early Qing expectations of Taiwan's natives.

Lin Qianguang and the Rhetoric of Privation

Whereas Chen Di's *Record* established a model for the rhetoric of primitivism, Lin Qianguang's *Brief Notes on Taiwan* (*Taiwan jilüe*), one of the earliest accounts written after the Qing conquest, was central in the development of the rhetoric of privation. Between 1687 and 1691, Lin Qianguang, a native of Fujian, served as the first instructor of Confucian schools in the prefectural government of Taiwan. *Brief Notes*, following the format of the genre of geographic records (*dili zhi*), is divided into various categories, with one section devoted to indigenous customs (*fengsu*).

Lin Qianguang's representation of the Taiwan indigenes forms a sharp contrast to Chen Di's primitivism. Lin began his description of savage customs with a declaration of their cultural inferiority:

> The native savages (*tufan*) . . . are a stupid people. They have no family names, no ancestral worship, and apart from their own father and mother, they do not recognize [kin such as] paternal or maternal uncles. They are unfamiliar with the calendar. Moreover, they do not know their own ages. By nature they like to kill people.[24]

In some details, Lin's description matches Chen Di's, but his language is much more explicitly contemptuous of the indigenes. As had Chen Di, Lin projected the indigenes back into the past, but with radically different results. This becomes apparent when Lin turned to the indigenes of Taiwan's Central Mountain Range, an area that the Chinese regarded as inhospitable wilderness during the early stage of Qing colonization.

> As one goes deeper into the mountains, the people have the appearance of apes, being shorter than three feet. When they see people, they climb into the treetops. If people want to capture them, then they draw their bows and confront them. There are also those who burrow out caves to live in, just like the folk of high antiquity.[25]

In comparing the indigenes to the "folk of high antiquity" (*taigu zhi min*), Lin drew on a vision of antiquity at odds with Chen Di's primitive utopia. "High antiquity," in Lin's usage, is a rude and brutish past when people lived like beasts. For Lin, history is unambiguous: history means progress and the indigenes' backwardness is an unequivocal sign of their inferiority. By using the tropes of cave-dwelling and tree-climbing to describe the indigenes of the mountains, Lin Qianguang constructed the Taiwan indigenes as atavistic beings surviving from the dawn of history. The image of archaic peoples as cave-dwellers and tree-climbers derives from a standard Chinese narrative of the evolution of civilization, one version of which was recorded in the "Liyun" chapter of the *Book of Rites*:

> Formerly the ancient kings had no houses. In winter they lived in caves which they had excavated, and in summer in nests which they had framed. They knew not yet the transforming power of fire, but ate the fruits of plants and trees, and the flesh of birds and beasts, drinking their blood, and swallowing (also) the hair and feathers. They knew not the use of flax and silk, but clothed themselves with feathers and skins.[26]

According to the *Book of Rites*, this crude state of human existence was left behind as the sages arose and taught people to build houses, cook with fire, fashion tools, and weave. The sages who introduced the arts of civilization to the Chinese people, bringing them step by step out of the brutish state of high antiquity, were important cultural heroes. First, there was Fu Xi, the Ox-Tamer, who taught people the arts of hunting, fishing, and cooking meat, and who invented the family. Then, there was Shen Nong, the Divine Farmer, who invented the plow and hoe and taught people the art of husbandry. Next, there was Huang Di, the Yellow Emperor, who invented boats and carts, the bow and arrow, ceramics, silk, writing, and a calendar. The notion that the sages introduced the arts of agriculture and civilization is an important one in early Chinese historiography, for the knowledge the Chinese gained from the sages distinguished them from the barbarians, who lacked such civilizing heroes and therefore remained stuck in a lower state of development.

The *Book of Rites'* picture of high antiquity served as one of the most important *locus classici* for the rhetoric of privation: it is a picture of the lowest stage of development, when human beings were little more than the beasts. The image of "high antiquity" as a brut-

ish age was commonplace in Chinese texts. The *Book of Changes* (*Yijing*), for example, also described the ancients as "dwelling in caves and living in the wilderness" (*xueju yechu*). Later texts, such as the Song dynasty *Lushi*, similarly stated that "the people of high antiquity dwelt in caves and lived in the wilderness," and "the people of early antiquity (*shanggu*) ate fur and smeared blood on their mouths."[27] These images of a brutish past significantly informed Qing conceptualizations of savagery.[28] From such classical sources derived the stock phrases of the rhetoric of privation: "eating fur and drinking blood," "dwelling in caves and nesting in trees," "wearing skins and feathers," and "loose hair and tattooed body." Just as the *Laozi* and the *Zhuangzi* became important sources for the rhetoric of primitivism, the *Book of Rites* and the *Book of Changes* established the rhetoric of privation.

Thus, references to the "folk of high antiquity" stood for the brutish age of development and were standard in the rhetoric of privation. In contrast, the figures of Fu Xi, Shen Nong, and Huang Di stood for an idealized stage of development, a time when the Chinese people had left behind the brutish existence of animals but had yet to be beset by the complexities, conflicts, and corruption of advanced civilization. Allusions to this time and to the civilizing heroes were commonplace in the rhetoric of primitivism.[29] The idea of a brutish stage followed by an idealized primitive stage would become fundamental to the construction of the "raw" savages and the "cooked" savages, a subject to which I turn in Chapter 5.

Overall, the rhetoric of privation dominated early Qing representations of the Taiwan indigenes. Early Kangxi texts often depicted the indigenes in terms of the stock phrases of privation, which were less empirical descriptions of their customs than figural representations of their backwardness. A popular metonym for the indigenes, for example, was "tattooed and black-toothed [people]." Lin Qianguang's work played a large role in promoting the rhetoric of privation in Qing accounts. His *Brief Notes* became quite well known because it served as the source for the "Native Savage Customs" ("Tufan fengsu") section of the first and second editions (1696 and 1712) of the *Gazetteer of Taiwan Prefecture*—both of which copied Lin nearly verbatim. Several other early Qing writers also copied Lin's lines on the ape-like "folk of high antiquity" in describing various hostile groups. One Kangxi author, for example, noted: "The Kuilei savages are about three or

four feet tall. They climb trees, jumping and throwing things, as nimble as monkeys. They are all a nest-lodging, cave-dwelling, fur-eating, blood-drinking bunch. They do not know how to plow and plant. They are the folk of high antiquity."[30] The notion of the "folk of high antiquity" as an uncivilized, pre-agricultural people thus soon became a standard feature of the rhetoric of privation. Early Qing ethnographic descriptions further portrayed the "savage" as belligerent, bloodthirsty, and stupid; they were, on the whole, quite derogatory. Primitivist representations of the Taiwan indigenes served largely as a counterdiscourse against the dominant view of the Taiwan indigenes as culturally inferior.

Yu Yonghe and the Dual Vision of the Savages

The earliest Chinese literati to write about Taiwan's natives did not travel much beyond the core of Chinese settlement in the southwestern corner of the island and were therefore unfamiliar with the extent of cultural diversity among the island's indigenous people. These early writers and gazetteer compilers referred to the Taiwan indigenes in blanket terms like "Eastern Savage" or "native savage." Soon after the establishment of Qing rule on the island, however, literati became aware of the need to draw finer distinctions among the various indigenous groups on the island, some of which appeared more "wild" than others.

This process of differentiating between different groups of indigenes was already evident to some degree in Lin Qianguang's account, which describes the "savages" of the mountains as particularly bellicose. The notion of distinguishing between threatening and nonthreatening natives was made even more explicit in Yu Yonghe's *Small Sea Travelogue*, which records his ten-month expedition from the Taiwan prefectural capital in the south of the island to the sulfur springs of Beitou in the north. The text is composed principally in the form of a travel diary, with dated entries, and also includes some poetry. It thus contains extensive first-person narration, Yu's subjective responses to the people and the environment, and his opinions on colonial policy. These qualities distinguish Yu's work from Lin Qianguang's terse, impersonal geographic record. Yu's detailed descriptions of the early Taiwan frontier made *Small Sea Travelogue* one of the most celebrated and widely copied accounts of Taiwan.

Yu differentiated various groups of natives by selectively employing the rhetoric of privation and primitivism. During the course of his journey up the western coast of the island, Yu encountered a wide range of indigenous peoples, some of whom he regarded as vile and uncouth, and others whom he found fairly civilized. He also noted that whereas the indigenes dwelling close to the Chinese settlements on the plains were generally accommodating to the Chinese, those dwelling in the mountains were often hostile. To account for these differences, Yu constructed two categories: the "native savages" (*tufan*) and the "wild savages" (*yefan*).

> Among the savages, there is a difference between native savages and wild savages. The wild savages live deep within the mountains, screened behind layered ranges of linked peaks that jut up into the Milky Way. The forest is so deep, and the bamboo thickets so dense that you cannot see the sky when you look up. Brambles and vines are [so tangled] that you cannot lift your foot. Since the Chaos of Creation, no ax has ever entered here. The wild savages live in its midst, dwelling in lairs and caves, drinking blood and eating fur. . . . The wild savages rely on their ferociousness and from time to time come out and plunder, burning huts and killing people, and then returning to their lairs. . . . They do not know to turn toward civilization (*xianghua*); they are really mere beasts![31]

Yu's primordial landscape of mountainous jungles untouched since the Creation is a fitting home for the "blood-drinking and fur-eating" and "cave-dwelling" "wild savages" who are little more than beasts. He represents both the landscape and its inhabitants as though they had remained static.[32] Even as he vilified the "wild savages," Yu, through the rhetoric of primitivism, romanticized the "native savages" of the plains. Drawing on the images of primitivism established by Chen Di, he continued: "Now, as for the nearby savages of the flatlands, in winter and summer they wear a single cloth, with coarse grain they can eat their fill. With no consciousness, no knowledge, no strivings, and no desires, they naturally roam in the world of Getian and Lord No-Cares."[33] Like Chen, Yu alluded to the Daoist classics in constructing an image of a primitive utopia where people are content with simple clothing and food. Yu's parallel construction "no consciousness, no knowledge, no strivings, and no desires" calls to mind the *Laozi*'s idealization of a people "without knowledge and without desire,"[34] and the phrase "naturally roam" (*ziyou*) calls to mind the *Zhuangzi*'s celebration of "free and easy wandering" (*xiaoyaoyou*). Finally, Yu echoed Chen Di in calling the "plains savages" the people of Getian and Lord No-Cares. Thus, although Yu denied the coevalness of both the "wild" and the "native" savages, he represented them as inhabiting radically different pasts. Through such representations, a bifurcated image of the Taiwan indigenes—the "friendly savage" and the "hostile savage"—emerged. These opposing images would later be codified as the "cooked savage" and the "raw savage."

From Figurative Allusion to Historical Analogy

By the eighteenth century, the trope of the indigenes as the people of antiquity had become a cliché of ethnographic discourse, employed by travel writers and gazetteer compilers alike. Qing literati clearly regarded this trope as a useful framework for understanding the cultural difference of the Taiwan indigenes. In the eighteenth century, as writers on Taiwan employed tropes of anachronism with increasing frequency and variety, the character of these tropes changed. First, authors began to move away from figurative toward more literal historical analogies. They went beyond the old clichés of knotting strings and burrowing caves to document a wide range of specific customs that appeared to be analogues of ancient practices: divination techniques, the construction of tools, funerary customs, and so on. The accumulation of such analogies, particularly when assembled in local gazetteers, had the effect of adding weight to the notion of the Taiwan indigenes as the ancients. Second, in comparison to seventeenth-century accounts, eighteenth-century records display a shift toward the rhetoric of primitivism. Allusions to Peach Blossom Spring, for example, abound in eighteenth-century writings. The notion of Taiwan as a Peach Blossom Spring was perhaps particularly apt in Qing writings, since the island had served as a refuge for Ming loyalists fleeing the invading Qing (although, of course, this was never mentioned directly by Qing authors). The rhetoric of privation by no means disappears in eighteenth-century works, but references to "blood-drinking and fur-eating," and "cave-dwelling and nest-building" appear less frequetly than in the earliest Qing accounts. This shift took place in large part because by the eighteenth century the indigenous people as a whole appeared less threatening and less strange to the Chinese, who therefore felt less need to demonize them.

The *Gazetteer of Zhuluo County* of 1717, edited by Zhou Zhongxuan, exemplifies these trends. Zhou Zhongxuan was a native of Guizhou who served as magistrate of Zhuluo county during the 1710s and as acting magistrate for Taiwan county in 1722. During his term of service in Zhuluo, he oversaw the compilation of the first gazetteer of that county. The account of "savage customs" in this gazetteer differs both quantitatively and qualitatively from those of the Taiwan prefectural gazetteers of 1696 and 1712.[35] Zhou, moreover, emphasized the rhetoric of primitivism more than the two earlier compilers had. In example after example, he projected the indigenes back into an idealized past. In the section "Miscellaneous Customs," for instance, he remarked:

Husband and wife are mutually devoted. Even when they are wealthy, they do not have maids and concubines or boy servants. For their entire lives they never go out the village gate. They hold hands when walking and ride together in the same carriage. They do not know the bitterness of being separated in life. They do not steal. They know not of gambling or gaming. They spend their days planting and weaving, fishing and hunting, and collecting firewood. Their world is an unchiseled block of primeval Chaos.[36]

In yet another image of a primitive utopia, the people are content, carefree, and innocent of vice. "Unchiseled block of primeval Chaos" is an allusion to the *Zhuangzi*, where it is stated, "The people of antiquity lived amidst the primeval Chaos, finding peace and tranquility united with the world."[37] The passage refers to a natural society that has not yet been shaped by the rules and rituals of civilization. Like his seventeenth-century predecessors, Zhou connected the notion of utopia to a temporal displacement, an escape from the contemporary world. These images seemed commonplace by the eighteenth century, but what makes Zhou's gazetteer stand out is the frequency of such images.

Another noteworthy feature of Zhou's account is his attempt to counter the derogatory clichés of earlier accounts with empirical observations. For example, in recording the custom of drinking deer's blood, Zhou remarked "but they do not eat the fur," thus correcting the *Book of Rites* phrase "blood-drinking and fur-eating."[38] This skepticism toward the privative clichés popular in the earliest descriptions of the Taiwan indigenes characterizes the work of a great number of

eighteenth-century writers. The effort to replace clichés with direct observation of customs was part of the general trend favoring empiricism in ethnographic writing in eighteenth-century Taiwan, a subject that I discuss further in Chapter 4.

Historical Analogy and Assimilation

The conceit of the Taiwan indigenes as the ancients proved useful for those Qing literati who argued for the ease of their assimilation into the Chinese empire. As Stevan Harrell has asserted, the notion that frontier peoples exist in an earlier stage of historical development suggests that civilizing them is simply a matter of bringing them forward in time. One of the earliest travel writers to make a strong case for the assimilability of the Taiwan indigenes was Yu Yonghe. Rejecting the argument that these people were merely "naked and tattooed savages who are not worth defending," he asserted that they possessed the potential to become "civilized" human beings. Yu supported this claim by drawing a historical analogy between the Taiwan indigenes and the Jingman barbarians of Chinese antiquity, who had long since been assimilated into the Chinese population.

If only we could civilize (*hua*) [the Taiwan indigenes] with rites and propriety and reform their customs with the *Classic of Poetry* (*Shijing*) and the *Classic of History* . . . how would they be any different from the people of China? In antiquity there [also] existed the custom of cropping the hair and tattooing the body among the Jingman, who lived in the close territory of Wu and Yue. Today this area has blossomed into a refuge for civilization.[39]

Here Yu set a developmental trajectory for the Taiwan indigenes based on historical analogy. By comparing the Taiwan indigenes to the tattooed and short-haired Jingman of antiquity, he suggested that the cultural privation signified by such practices is simply a historical stage. If the Jingman were able to be transformed into Chinese subjects, then so can the Taiwan indigenes.

Yu's analogy between the Taiwan indigenes and the Jingman was a significant move in another respect, for the Jingman dwelt in the southern borderlands of China. In associating the Taiwan indigenes with the Southern rather than the Eastern Barbarians, Yu set a precedent for an important shift in Qing ethnographic discourse: the gradual conceptual transformation of the Taiwan indigenes from eastern

islanders to southern Chinese frontier tribes. This rhetorical move, which would serve to link the Taiwan indigenes more closely to China proper and the history of Chinese southward expansion, naturalized their incorporation into the Chinese empire. From Yu's time on, we find numerous comparisons of the Taiwan indigenes to the Man and Mai, ancient southern tribes, as well as to the Miao and the Yao, contemporary southern tribes.

For Yu, the key to the transformation of the Taiwan indigenes lay in education in the Confucian classics. Based on his belief in their capacity for moral transformation through education, Yu argued for the ease of assimilating the Taiwan indigenes: "At the longest it will take a hundred years, at the fastest, thirty."[40] Once transformed, the people of Taiwan would be no different from the people of China.

The Chinese term for "to civilize" (*hua*) literally means "to transform"; to civilize was to morally transform. According to the Confucian concept of transformation, exposure to Civilization and the authority of the ruler would bring about progressive moral improvement, as people learned moral principles and changed their behavior in accordance. The ideal of what Pamela Kyle Crossley has called "transformationalism" was central to Chinese culturalism, the notion that Confucian culture was a universally valid (and superior) Civilization, open to all who submitted to its transformative power. As such, the process of moral improvement could transform not only the ordinary Chinese but also barbarians.

The process by which barbarians were transformed was known as *xianghua*, "turning toward transformation/Civilization," or *laihua*, "coming to be transformed"—the idea being that the prestige of Civilization would inspire barbarians to come toward it and submit to transformation. In theory, once barbarians were morally transformed, they would no longer be barbarians; Chinese identity was therefore understood in cultural and moral terms.[41] As Crossley demonstrates in *The Translucent Mirror: History and Identity in Qing Imperial Ideology*, the ideal of transformationalism was central to Qing ideology under the Kangxi and Yongzheng (1723–35) emperors, forming the basis for the incorporation of various frontier peoples into the empire. More will be said about this subject in Chapter 4.

Early Qing policy in Taiwan was guided by this ideology of transformationalism. As John Shepherd has shown, the Qing court viewed the "civilizing" of the indigenes as an important means of extending

state control.[42] Yet, the court approached this matter conservatively, seeking only to promote Confucian civic values and submission to constituted authority and not to enforce the wholesale assimilation of the indigenes. Cultural differences were tolerated as long as they did not threaten Qing control. The transformation of the Taiwan indigenes was understood as a gradual and long-term process. Therefore, the efforts to "civilize" the indigenes instituted by the Kangxi administration were limited and consisted primarily of educating youths in the Confucian classics (even then, the administration devoted very few funds to this cause). These educational efforts were considered a part of the general endeavor of raising the level of civilization on the island, among the Han settlers and the indigenes alike.

This conservative approach to "civilizing" the indigenes was bolstered by the conceit of the savages as the ancients, which supported the notion that the Taiwan indigenes were not absolutely different from the Chinese but simply farther behind them on the ladder of evolution. The historical metaphor thus served to domesticate the strangeness of Taiwan indigenes by placing them within a familiar trajectory of historical development and moral transformation.

The Rhetoric of Privation and Colonial Critiques

In *The Chinese World Order: Traditional China's Foreign Relations* (1968), John King Fairbank argued that traditional Chinese relations with non-Chinese peoples were colored by sinocentrism and the assumption of Chinese superiority.[43] Given this model, one would expect Chinese accounts of frontier peoples to be marked by an attitude of Han Chinese superiority. Indeed, this was the case in the majority of early Qing representations of the Taiwan indigenes, which depicted these people as uncivilized, brutish, and stupid creatures. Yet, Qing ethnographic writing was not uniformly chauvinistic, and a significant number of literati fashioned themselves as defenders of the indigenes. Yu Yonghe, for example, deplored the abuses that the natives had suffered, first at the hands of the Dutch and the Japanese, then at the hands of Koxinga's "lawless" men, and finally, at the hands of the Qing settlers. Qing literati objected to the exploitation of the indigenes on humanitarian grounds, as well as out of a Mencian concern for the well-being of imperial subjects. Frontier officials were also aware that maltreatment could provoke rebellion. They therefore per-

ceived the behavior of greedy Han Chinese settlers, unscrupulous interpreters, and venal officials who "squeezed" the natives as a potential threat to frontier stability.

The rhetoric of primitivism provided a ready vehicle for Qing literati who wanted to criticize Han Chinese who took advantage of the "naïveté" of the Taiwan indigenes. Chen Di, for example, used the rhetoric of primitivism to censure Chinese traders who cheated the Taiwan indigenes with inferior goods and corrupted them by introducing them to worldly desires. Qing writers similarly deplored the abuse of the Taiwan indigenes by unscrupulous Han Chinese. By constructing the Taiwan indigenes as innocent and ingenuous victims of scheming and greedy Han Chinese, critics of colonial exploitation sought to take the moral high ground.

This was the strategy employed by Zhou Zhongxuan, who justified his calls for administrative reforms by appealing to the paternalistic ideology of the Qing state, which cast the emperor as the protector of the weak. During his term as acting magistrate of Taiwan county in 1722, Zhou used the rhetoric of primitivism to appeal to the governor-general in defense of the exploited indigenes: "The savage customs are simple and pure, remnants from remote antiquity. Ever since Chinese settlers mixed among them, the strong ones have cheated them."[44] Due to their simple natures, Zhou argued, the savages deserved special protection from Chinese encroachment and the exactions of Chinese tax collectors.

Thus, tropes of anachronism were so commonplace in Qing representations of the Taiwan indigenes that they even found their way into memorials and other policy communications. This is not surprising, since there were numerous linkages between travel writing and the Qing colonial administration. The authors of travel accounts were themselves frequently connected to the Qing colonial apparatus. Travel accounts were widely read by colonial officials and policymakers, and, as mentioned in the preceding chapter, they were a primary source for the Taiwan gazetteers. Through these gazetteers, the views of writers such as Chen Di, Lin Qianguang, and Yu Yonghe became familiar to colonial officials. Tropes that may have begun as literary allusions thereby became conventional elements of colonial discourse, part of the language of colonial policy debates.

Although such examples are numerous, overall, tropes of anachronism are not as commonplace in policy writings as they are in Qing travel accounts and gazetteers. Moreover, it is difficult to judge the degree to which policymakers were persuaded by this rhetoric, as opposed to economic and strategic arguments. More likely, the rhetoric of privation and primitivism simply provided writers the terms in which to couch their arguments. Nonetheless, as a counterbalance to Han Chinese chauvinism, the rhetoric of primitivism played a significant role in Qing colonial discourse, particularly as a vehicle for critiques of colonial exploitation.

An examination of tropes of anachronism in late imperial accounts of Taiwan suggests appreciable similarities between Chinese representations of non-Han indigenous peoples and Western anthropological constructions of the primitive through the denial of coevalness. Yet it also suggests differences between the two discourses. For example, Fabian asserts that "the history of our discipline [i.e., Western anthropology] reveals that such use of Time almost invariably is made for the purpose of distancing those who are observed from the Time of the observer."[45] In the Chinese case, however, the comparison of indigenous peoples to the ancients was also part of an inclusive discourse, used to make the case that they were worthy of membership in the Chinese empire. Moreover, whereas Western anthropological discourse, based as it is on the episteme of natural history, tends to privilege the notion of progress, late imperial Chinese travel writers were more inclined to privilege antiquity. Thus, the notion of history as degeneration from an idealized past figures more prominently in Chinese writings, and the denial of coevalness assumed a rather more ambiguous function than in Western anthropological discourse.

This chapter has demonstrated how, in late imperial accounts of Taiwan, the dual vision of history as both progress and degeneration led to the emergence of two opposing rhetorics—that of privation and that of primitivism. This ambiguity allowed writers to use the trope of the savages as ancients for a variety of ends: both to denigrate and to idealize the indigenes, and both to legitimate colonization and to critique colonial abuses. The seemingly oppositional rhetorics of privation and primitivism expressed not only the authors' conflicting attitudes of fear and admiration for the indigenous people of Taiwan but also ambivalence toward their own culture. The denigration of the savage is rooted in Chinese cultural chauvinism, and the idealization of the savage reveals a Chinese anxiety that material advancement might lead to moral degeneration. Travelers thus projected the virtues

of antiquity onto the "primitives" of Taiwan in order to make self-reflective critiques of Chinese society. Because Qing writers used tropes of anachronism with such flexibility, we must attend to the context in which these tropes were deployed if we wish to determine their rhetorical effects.

The trope of the savages as the ancients would serve as the dominant trope in representations of the Taiwan indigenes into the late nineteenth century. In Chapter 5, I examine how the opposing rhetorics of privation and primitivism figured in the construction of the "raw" and "cooked" savages. The next chapter turns to the representation of Taiwan's landscape, also figured by many Qing travel writers as an anachronous space, a primeval landscape untouched by human hands.