

³¹ Ibid.

³² Su published a book and several articles on Tanshui's missionary history, which included the work of George Mackay and Ke Shejie – both of them served as ministers in their lifetimes.

³³ Su's publications are *Tu shuo danshui sibai nian* [Illustrated 400-Year History of Tanshui], *Danshui zhen daolan ditu* [The Tour Map of Tanshui], *Danshui zhen simiao caifengxing* [The Beautiful Temples of Tanshui Township], *Danshui zhen paotai yu gubao xunli* [The Gun Post and Old Castles in Tanshui Township].

³⁴ In 1996, Tanshui Elementary School, the oldest school in town, celebrated its 100-year anniversary. Schoolteachers, local historians, politicians, and gentries collaborated in the celebration. Mr. Su was also involved. The anniversary resulted in a couple of edited volumes on Tanshui's local history and legends, most of which were transmitted only through oral tradition before.

³⁵ Interview of Su, April 25, 1998.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Su, "Jiaohao bu jiaozuo de zaidi gongzuozhe [The Idealistic yet Unpopular Local Intellectuals]," *The E-journal of South Humanity and Culture*.

³⁸ Cai Minghui, *Taiwan xiangzhen paixi yu zhengzhi bianqian: Hekou zhen "shanding" yu "jiezai" de zhengdou* [The Local Factions and Political Changes in Taiwan: the Struggles between the "Mountaineers" and the "Street Fellows"] (Taipei: Hongye wenhua shiye youxian gongsi, 1998), 165.

³⁹ Interview of Chen Junzhe, July 27, 1998.

⁴⁰ *Liberty News*, November 8, 1995.

⁴¹ *Huwei Jie* 9 (1995).

⁴² My experience in 1998.

⁴³ Huang Ruimao, *Wenhua Danshui* 10 (1997).

⁴⁴ Renato Rosaldo, "Imperial Nostalgia," *Representations* 26 (1989), 108.

CHAPTER 4

LOCALIZING THE NATIONAL FUTURE: PLACE-MAKING MOVEMENT IN ILAN

IN THE COLLECTIVE SEARCH FOR "NATIVE TAIWAN" MANY PLACES HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED as reservoirs of the authentic, each conserving different aspects of the kaleidoscopic Taiwanese culture. Yet, very few if any have utilized the past as thoroughly as Ilan. Since the early 1990s, the Ilan county government has striven to build its distinctive locality with the cooperation of urban planners and culture workers. Through a decade of place-making, Ilan has become reputed as "the most nativist county of Taiwan." Its vision of regional planning, moreover, has prefigured the built environment of a Taiwanese nationalist aesthetics. Chen Chi-nan, the famous advocate of community revitalization, once said Ilan had "an enduring sense of place in this becoming-placeless Taiwan."¹ To fulfill the otherwise unattainable dream of building an authentic place, he relocated his vision to Ilan after resigning the position of deputy director of the Council for Cultural Affairs in 1997 to continue his unfinished community projects.²

Chen's recognition of Ilan's achievement in place making was shared by the mass media, cultural workers, and the Ilan county government itself. "The Ilan experience" became "the exemplar for cultural construction by local governments" in Taiwan's cultural discourse.³ As stated earlier, a prevailing sense of cultural crisis emerged in many local regions of Taiwan in the late 1980s, in which the notion that culture, in particular native or folk cultures, as needing to be "preserved" or "developed" became widely acknowledged. The key factor distinguishing Ilan from other places, however, was its effective, coordinated bureaucracy. In the previous chapter I have described how the place-making project of Tanshui was interrupted by unwilling local politicians. The blueprint envisioned by the community workers was undermined because it failed to articulate the interests of local

political factions. It was not uncommon for Taiwan's community workers to be trapped in futile struggles of local politics, which have become a major frustration for them. The Ilan experience was a rare case in which local government successfully initiated and coordinated a place-making movement. This exceptional process, it should be noted, was only made possible by the distinctive regional politics of the county where non-KMT politicians had controlled the administration system since 1983.

Culture has long been an ideological battleground for political parties in Taiwan. Exposing the extensive and forceful cultural maneuvers of the ruling party, Winckler wrote, "the extraordinary success of Nationalist cultural policy in shaping Taiwan's postwar cultural development is another sort of 'miracle.'"⁴ Ironically the "Ilan miracle," created in opposition to the cultural ideology of the KMT party-state, was based on similar maneuvers in which a strong-willed county government implemented a "direct cultural policy"⁵ through vigorous political initiatives to produce and transform the cultural consciousness of the locale. The politico-cultural maneuver that the Ilan government made to territorialize its local administration was no different than the geo-political project of the nation-state in grounding its nationhood in a specific space. In other words, Ilan's cultural project coincided with Taiwan's nation-building process, and thus critics saw its central coordination by local government as a localized version of state-centrism.⁶ Yet it was exactly because of this parallelism that Ilan's cultural experience became so highly acclaimed in the late 1990s. Toward the end of the Lee Teng-hui regime, the symbolic implication of Ilan had changed from being the haven of political rebellion to the guardian of Taiwanese native cultures. The cultural implementation of the Ilan government attracted national and international attention, and successfully cultivated a sentiment of localism interwoven with the Taiwanese nationalism and cosmopolitanism.

This chapter describes the place-making tactics employed by the Ilan County government; most of the programs were carried out by its Cultural Center (now the Bureau of Cultural Affairs). Many of the county programs have been valorized as exemplars of Taiwan's political and cultural accomplishments; members of its power elite, moreover, have been promoted to the central government by president Chen Shui-bian's new political regime. Therefore I suggest that a detailed analysis of Ilan's technologies of locality production is illuminating in understanding the formulation process of the new form of governmentality in the 1990s Taiwan.

ILAN COUNTY; GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

The county of Ilan is located in the northeastern corner of Taiwan, about 50 miles from Taipei. Steep mountains, which extend into the Pacific Ocean, separate the county from the Taipei Basin and contain the flatland of the

county, known as the Lanyang Plain. The mountains are a major factor that postponed the county's development. While the superhighways built during the 1980s quickly incorporated many west-coast counties into urban centers, Ilan, the "back-of-the-mountain area" was left out. Its connection to Taipei City relied on a railway and two winding roads all dating back to the Japanese period. The lack of modern, rapid transportation system prevented Ilan from being transformed into another suburban area of the Taipei metropolis as was the fate of other west-coast counties within the same distance from Taipei proper. Many workers had to move to cities, leaving their family behind, and only returning home during weekends. Over the past 15 years the population of Ilan County remained stable at roughly 460,000, a notable statistic considering Taiwan's rapid population growth during those years.

While other rural counties also shared the above problems such as transportation difficulties and depopulation of wage earners, Ilan was unique in its history of local politics. The county people elected the first non-KMT county magistrate in 1981; in the subsequent two decades the KMT have never won any of the county magistrate elections. This long period of political victory of the opposition party became a legend of democratic movement, and won for Ilan the name "Mecca of democracy."

Despite its fame, the uneasy relation between the county government and the KMT at the central level delayed development of Ilan's infrastructure. The county relied mostly on an agricultural economy and did not have sufficient tax income to support itself. Ilan, like other agricultural areas, depended to a large extent on subsidies from the central government to fund its construction expenditure. The financial dependency of the periphery has been a crucial factor by which the KMT retained its centralized power in Taiwan. Ilan's "political rebellion" then sabotaged its opportunity to obtain governmental funding. One famous case illustrating the uneasy struggle between Ilan and the central government was the road project of the Taipei-Ilan express highway. The road construction was temporally suspended by the Executive Yuan in 1989 because the Ilan government rejected an investment project of the Taiwan Plastic Corp. in Lize Industrial Park and defied the development plan supported by central government. The suspension of the road project was viewed as a "punishment" for Ilan's political disobedience.

Financial dependency and the complex political struggle forced the Ilan county government to seek alternatives for invigorating its local economy and consolidating its power. Culture thus came into play. Cultural tourism was planned as a major source of county income; a project of cultural revitalization that directly challenged the KMT's cultural policy further consolidated the political legitimacy of the county government. The amount of attention that the Ilan government paid to the revitalization of vernacular culture coincided with the postmodern nostalgic praxis of post-martial law Taiwanese society. Mass media and Taiwan-consciousness boosters depicted

Ilan as a symbolic site where authentic Taiwanese cultures could still be saved from the insensitive developmentalism of the KMT. After 1994, many of Ilan's place making strategies were adopted by other counties, and even adopted by the central government to boost the collective consciousness of Taiwan as a unique *national place*.

A BRIEF POLITICAL HISTORY

Ilan's production of a distinctive locality should be seen in the context of its peculiar local politics over the past two decades. Critics often interpreted the exceptional trajectory of Ilan's regional development as the outcome of its long "anti-oppression" tradition, which enabled the county government to think differently from the KMT about the trajectory of regional development. This history of political resistance has been reified through Taiwan's political transformation during the 1990s; it provided a powerful frame for the collective memory of the place and indoctrinated the temporal imagery of Ilan. The legacy of Ilan's democratic politics began with Guo Yuxin, an outspoken provincial councilman whose tenure lasted for 25 years (1948–1972). Guo's reputation was established for two reasons: first he never joined the KMT and, for that matter, was constantly censored by the KMT government. As widely circulated in the local legend, Guo was defeated in 1972, which ended his tenure, because the KMT bought and fabricated votes. Second, Guo was brave enough to criticize the government – a dangerous thing to do under the Chiang Kai-shek regime. After the defeat in 1972, Guo immigrated to the US; his position was later inherited by Lin Yi-hsiung, and subsequently the three consecutive county magistrates (1983–present).

The real breakthrough of Ilan's administration system occurred in 1982, when Chen Dingnan, a businessman in his mid-thirties with no prior political background, was elected to be the county magistrate of Ilan and ended the domination of the KMT in this county. Chen's surprising victory was based upon several factors: First, although Chen had no prior experience in the political realm, his educational background (as a graduate from National Taiwan University, the best university in the country) appealed to a lot of voters. Secondly, and probably more importantly, the tragic murder of the family of another significant Ilan political figure—Lin Yi-hsiung—inspired a lot of people to participate in the democratic movement. Lin was a provincial legislator and a leader of the anti-KMT movement at that time. He was arrested after the Kaohsiung uprising of December 1980. During the period of trial his mother and twin daughters were found dead in their apartment. Only his eldest daughter survived despite serious injuries. The murderer was never identified, but many people believed that the homicide was committed by secret agents of the KMT to punish the democratic leader. Ilan locals reacted very strongly to this tragedy as Lin was elected there and well regarded by his supporters. A woman from Lin's native village remembers:

I shall always remember the day when Lin Yi-hsiung carried the ashes of his three deceased family members back to our village. The whole street was silent; everyone stood in their porch, waiting for the funeral troop. . . . My family has always voted for the opposition party since then.⁷

Chen Dingnan won that election. He soon implemented several new policies: schools would no longer hold the daily morning ritual of flag raising; movie theaters would no longer play the national anthem before the featured film; and the notorious personnel-cum-censorship office "*Renner Shi*" would no longer exist at public schools to watch the course content and control teachers' political loyalty. Those reforms aroused a lot of criticism from the pro-KMT conservatives, who portrayed Chen as a tyrannical, "self-serving" radical. For Ilan locals, however, none of the political reforms meant much; what they really cared about was the improvement Chen made in the then-staggering and corrupted county bureaucracy. The following anecdote has been shared by quite a few people:

On the first day of Chen's term, county officials went to work and found to their horror that the magistrate had already stood outside the county hall, waiting for everyone to come in. Before then, the Ilan officials were infamous for their laziness and corruption. From that day on they realized that life would not be as easy as before.

In his second term between 1986–1989, Chen proposed "environmentalism" and "tourism" as the two primary trajectories of county development. In conformity with these goals, he rejected the plan for the Sixth Naphtha Cracker factory to be built in the Lize Industrial Park by the Taiwan Plastic Corporation, a proposal which would have brought "thousands of job opportunities for the economically depressed Ilan." Chen mobilized county residents for a street demonstration in front of the Ministry of Economics, and declared that he would cut the water supply of the plant should the project pass. Consequently, the corporation decided to pull out of Ilan. Annoyed by the government-led resistance, however, the Executive Yuan decided to withdraw the plan for the Taipei-Ilan express highway, which had been proposed by Chen and was still being discussed in the Legislative Yuan. The cancellation of the road construction secluded Ilan from the suburban sprawl of the Taipei area,⁸ and inadvertently strengthened Ilan's sense of place.

Chen's administration was so successful that many locals adored him to the degree of deity worship. One common folk legend was that no typhoon dared to attack Ilan during the eight years of Chen's tenure, inferring that Chen was blessed with some sort of supernatural power. Therefore Chen's fame placed a lot of pressure on his successor, Yu Hsyi-kun. In 1989 when Yu won the election, many people doubted that, with only high-school

education, he could have exceeded his precursor even though he vowed to "inherit" Ilan's anti-KMT tradition set by Chen. Soon after he took over as county magistrate, Yu faced a difficult position of striking a balance between conforming to the opposition route paved by Chen and distinguishing his own administration from that of his predecessor.

The path that Yu chose was based on "culture," already a highly contested term but one which had never been prioritized in any county administration. By focusing on culture Yu would achieve two aims. On the one hand, the emphasis on local or native culture would effectively contest the KMT's China-centered cultural ideology; on the other, the delineation of a local culture would ground the political legitimacy of the oppositional county government. In this sense, Yu's cultural practice was similar to the decolonizing project of various post-colonial nation-states, in which a newly-emerged nation state built up their political legitimacy by transforming and re-articulating the cultural memory of its people.⁹

The cultural policy that Yu adopted was a gradual process. In the beginning "culture" equated to the oppressed and endangered vernacular culture (the "archaic Taiwanese culture.") In the campaign platform for his first term in 1989, Yu proposed to reform KMT's China-centered pedagogy by implementing a native-place curriculum and "mother-tongue" (dialect) education. He coordinated educators to compile textbooks of various dialects, and of Ilan's history and geography. In addition to textbook reform, Yu implemented the "folklore heritage" program (*xinchuan jihua*), which involved more than half the public schools within the county.¹⁰ In this program each participating school was designated to develop a certain folk art, such as lion dancing, Taiwanese opera (Koa-a-hi), puppet theater, ethnic music, Atayal weaving, and so on, as its extracurricular student training. Despite some controversy regarding what "Taiwanese folk art" would include,¹¹ the educational reform that Yu advocated in his initial political stage was soon widely established in the Ilan county in opposition to the China-centered curriculum.

In his end-of-the-year speech to the county council in 1991 Yu first advocated "Building the County with Culture" (*wenhua lixian*). In his second electoral campaign for magistrate in 1993, "Culture," "environmentalism," and "tourism" were written into Yu's campaign platform as the three fundamental objectives for county development. At the time when most local politicians in Taiwan firmly believed in unlimited economic growth and technological advancement, Yu's devotion to cultural affairs was unprecedented. Thus Yu's culture-first policy effectively distinguished him from the predecessor Chen Dingnan and made him equally legendary in Ilan's dangwai (outside of KMT) legacy.

THE SPIRITUAL HOMELAND OF TAIWANESE PEOPLE

In 1993, Ilan County Government published an illustrated book entitled *Ilan: The Spiritual Homeland of the Taiwanese People* as part of its self-promotion effort. Edited by a renowned journalist Yang Xianhong, this book was composed of annotated photos and poetic depictions of the county landscape and folk life. Its main theme was to celebrate the natural and cultural beauty of the Ilan county. Based on the proposition that geographical "distinctiveness" shapes the distinctive characteristics of the people, it stated that Ilan people were innately "introverted, persevering, yet hospitable," due to their geographic seclusion. The spectacular beauty of the county was the proof that Ilan natives "valued their native place more than any other Taiwanese." Even after relocating to other areas, the book further stated, Ilan people retain a strong attachment to their native place. "They (Ilan natives) identify themselves and others as Ilanese by their unique accent" regardless of where they live.

In addition to celebrating the place, the book aspired to educate a wider crowd. In the conclusion the editors stated their hope that readers would be caught and inspired by the place of Ilan. They declared, "The objective of our county policies is to preserve a clean land where we will build a haven for the Taiwanese people to nourish their souls and embrace the beauty of Mother Nature."¹² They believed that "the dream of Ilan is exactly the dream of the Taiwanese people; the trajectory of the county parallels the direction of Taiwan's path."

The book *Ilan* was only one of many examples that illustrated the conscious place-making process of the Ilan county government, a project that involved urban planners, cultural workers, and idealistic administrative officials. The ultimate goal was to build a model for alternative development. In the process, Ilan as a place was attributed multiple levels of symbolic meaning; it became the remedy for public nostalgia in the contemporary frenzied search for "Taiwanese essence," a microcosm of "Taiwan's cultural and natural environment,"¹³ and a model for a "green" politics.¹⁴ Although the place-making process began with revitalization of folk culture, it did not remain reified in the frame of traditional culture, as with other projects of historical reclamation. Rather, future-oriented rhetoric was often adopted, in which a selected past was set up as a fixed point of reference against which one could measure the present deficiency, as a fundamental step toward envisioning a utopian national future.¹⁵

Just like the technologies of imagining the nation-space, Ilan's place-making movement was a spatiotemporal process. In terms of temporality, the county's history was rewritten on a Taiwan-centered chronology. New practices of commemoration reorganized public memory. In terms of spatiality, an ensemble of extensive community projects and a "new archi-

ecture movement" was implemented to transfigure the county's cultural landscape.

**"RECONSTRUCTING OUR HISTORICAL SUBJECTIVITY;
CONSOLIDATING OUR SELF-IDENTITY":¹⁶ CREATING A SPACE FOR
LOCAL HISTORY**

Many scholars have pointed out the interwoven relationship between identity formation and historical writing. Identity formation is grounded in history—a selective compilation of the multiple pasts. Historical narrative, conversely, is subject to change along with the shifting of present identities. In a different context (war commemoration in Japan) Yoneyama writes, "The dominant processes of spatial containment define the proper territories for memorializing, prescribing whose experiences should be remembered and when, where, and how they should be invoked."¹⁷ Rewriting history is often the first step for a nation-state or ethnic group to establish the basis of identity formation. The Ilan government has placed a lot of emphasis on historical preservation. As early as the Chen Dingnan period, a group of high-school teachers, sponsored by the county government, had worked on excavating and recording historic sites within the county. Members of this preservation team later became important players in Yu Hsyi-kun's advisory group. In January 1992, the Ilan County Archive Center was planned as a database for the newly established Series of Ilan County History. It was the first government-owned local history archive center in Taiwan.

On October 16, 1993, Ilan County Archive Center was formally opened to the public. This date had a special meaning for Ilan. 197 years ago the first Han settler had arrived in Ilan on this date after a long hike from Taipei. The event symbolized the beginning of Ilan's written history, regardless of the prior one thousand-year long settlement of the plains aborigines in this area.¹⁸ As Yu said in his opening speech entitled "Reconstructing Our Historical Subjectivity; Consolidating Our Self-Identity," the establishment of the County History Archive was an important step in the transformation process of local historical consciousness from oriented toward the "China proper" to native-centered.

The library collection included research data gathered within the Ilan region, archives such as news coverage drawn from a major newspaper during Japanese occupation, literary work written by Ilan-born authors, and general reference books for local history studies. In addition, the library published "Ilan Archives," a bimonthly journal with contributions on folk religion, historic heritage, and other locally related reports.

The establishment of this archive inspired greater attention to local history preservation in Taiwan. In 1996 the Taiwan provincial governor James Soong requested every county office to put more effort into preserving their local historical archives. He also demanded that each county set up a specific

sector to collect and manage the archives. Per his command many county offices sent their staff to visit Ilan's history library. Consequently, the library became an exemplar library for other Taiwanese counties, inaugurating a "trend" of local archives preservation.¹⁹

Another history making process focused on re-figuring commemoration. "The 195th Anniversary of Ilan" was held in 1991 to celebrate the first Han settlement in the Ilan region. Five years later, "Ilan 200" opened up with five different festivals, which brought significant tourist money to Ilan and marked a new periodization of local history. As Rutheiser comments on "urban festival markets," "Characterized by slick marketing and a high romanticized and selective use of history, the festival market married the consuming imperatives of the shopping mall with the programmed feel of the theme park."²⁰ In Ilan, the enlivening of cultural festivals has had an additional implication by signaling a shift in historical time from a China-centered chronology to a local one.

COLONIAL NOSTALGIA

The shifting of the framework of Ilan's historical memory from China to the local necessitated a re-evaluation of the Japanese occupation—perhaps the most awkward and ambivalent period in Taiwan's history. Witnessed at the Museum of Ilan's Political Settlement was a pervasive sense of colonial nostalgia. This museum was remodeled from the county magistrate's official residence. It is a Japanese-style house, situated in a neighborhood of governmental housing established during Japanese occupation. In 1997, right before Yu's tenure ended he decided to remodel the house into a museum exhibiting Ilan's political past. The decision had a two-fold intention. First, the exhibition would encourage public education on Ilan's unique political history since the Qing dynasty. Second, the remodeling and preservation of the house fit well into the preservation policy conducted by the county government.²¹ Yu said that the purpose of building the museum was to let the "people of Ilan understand how their ancestors have handled public affairs under different political regimes."²² He hoped that visitors would draw on the past experience to figure out the direction for the future development.

Just like everything political in Taiwan, the museum was not without controversy. Its architecture was criticized as resembling to a "stereotypical" Japanese restaurant.²³ According to the critic, the original house was a mixture of Japanese aesthetics with the "living space and raw material" of Ilan locals. Yet the architect erased all Taiwanese flavors and remodeled the house and its surroundings according to coded images of Japanese landscape architecture.

The museum was Taiwan's first exhibition center on the history of local politics. It had four sections, each one dedicated to a different facet of Ilan's political history. At the entrance there was a panel presenting the different

boundaries of the Ilan county throughout the three political regimes of its history – the Qing Dynasty, the Japanese period, and the KMT period. The local history begins in 1812, when Ilan (then Kamalan) was incorporated into the territory of the Qing Empire. By using different lights the visitors could get a sense of the shifting boundaries set by different regimes. It should be noted that the ROC government was juxtaposed with the Qing and Japanese governments. In the preface of the museum brochure it was written that

Ilan was not incorporated by the Qing Empire until 1812. After that Ilan has been ruled by the Qing, Japanese, and the KMT governments. Each political regime has sent their governors to control the people, resources, and administrations of this place. During each period, the ruler had different attitudes and ways of political control. People in Ilan also reacted differently to each of the political powers. Therefore we juxtapose the historical materials from different period.

The memorial was said to express the “root” of the Ilan spirit, presumably different from other places in Taiwan due to Ilan’s unique settlement history and geographic location. In tune with the multicultural aura produced by the county government, the memorial also showed how the various ethnic groups within the county had “resolved their original conflicts, and moved forward to harmonious and cooperative ethnic relations in this land.”²⁴ In other words, the past ethnic struggles and oppression between Han and the aborigines were purged in this official space of memory. What was presented was a harmoniously juxtaposed ensemble of local culture named Ilan.

ARCHITECTURAL MOVEMENT—CREATING THE NEW LANDSCAPE

Lefebvre proposed that architecture is a human production that turns nature into a cultural landscape imbued with complex politico-social relations.²⁵ In other words, through architectural construction we transform undifferentiated “space” into “place,”²⁶ an act that, similar to Nadia Lovell’s argument, constructs the landscape as a “primary source of involvement for the establishment of human belonging and emplacement.”²⁷

In addition to the transformation of its historicity, the Ilan government also worked on modifying its cultural landscape. Starting from the late 1980s, the Ilan county government has been collaborating with local historians and architects to define, design, and promote an “Ilan architectural style.” Three parks, the County Hall, the Memorial of Ilan’s Political Settlement, the Performance Hall, several bridges, school buildings, and some private houses were built under this agenda. These examples of a “New Architecture” have become the icons of Ilan’s regional identity and tourist attractions. In a sense, Ilan’s coordinated urban planning pioneered a new national aesthetics for

Taiwan. Its cultural landscape shaped the sense of place and belonging for the local residents. “Ilan, a place with a better future” was often said by the locals when comparing its landscape with the bad urban planning of Taiwan’s west coast. Ilan’s architectural movement was meant to maintain and strengthen the sense of locality in an era of globalization where the world is filled with a sense of “the loss of local stabilities and local originalities.”²⁸

Despite the attribution of “newness” to the architectural movement, its constructions indeed exhibited a juxtaposition of different elements drawn from Taiwan’s past. Moreover, the architectural movement was interwoven with multiple layers of discourses enunciated by journalists and scholars who, often in a celebratory tone, attempted to comprehend and define the socio-historical implications of Ilan’s newly-constructed cultural landscape. As a result, Ilan’s locality was envisioned by architects as a selective evocation of the past and an imagineering projection for the future. This production of locality, however, can only be grasped within the context of globalization as many of the architectural projects of the movement were actually designed by Japanese architectural firms.

According to the dominant narrative, the canon of Ilan’s architecture started with the exemplar – The Tung Shan River Park—built by the “Elephant” group, an extension of a Japanese architecture firm “Team Zoo.” The park was the first artistically-designed recreational place in Taiwan. While looking for contractors to plan the park during the mid-1980s, the county magistrate Chen Dingnan, unsatisfied with Taiwan’s architectural quality at the time, searched numerous Japanese journals and became intrigued by the work of Team Zoo. Chen invited the firm to design the park on a riverbank adjacent to a wetland. It took the firm almost eight years to complete the construction, and the outcome would become highly influential for Taiwan’s public constructions. Tung-shan River Park, a public park with deliberate artistic landscaping, marked the perfect endpoint to Chen’s eight years of tenure. Its tidy, coordinated design soon became the showcase of Ilan’s alternative development strategy; the park itself has been the most popular tourist spot in the Ilan County.

Tung-shan River Park soon became the icon of Ilan’s “green politics,” symbolizing the clean and efficient administration of the county bureaucracy, and “the hope of Taiwan” at large. Its popularity not only elevated Chen to the realm of national politics, but also promoted Ilan’s reputation. Locally, the park developed a sense of pride among the residents about their native place. After the park was built, one poll indicated that the Ilan locals had the highest sense of pride among the twenty-one counties in Taiwan; they also felt most satisfied with their county magistrate Chen Dingnan.²⁹ Many stories circulated about how the architectural miracle was made possible. One of the most famous stories was that Chen had checked every single tile of the bathrooms in the park, making sure that those tiles were perfectly clean. His

high standards aroused some adverse reactions among bureaucrats, but also won him the title of "Qing Tian," referring to the legendary governor Bao in Song dynasty.

Tung Shan River Park was viewed as a proof of how well a local community could do without the intervention of the corrupted and inefficient bureaucracy of the KMT.³⁰ Tung Shan River became known as "the River of Life, the Eternal Hope of Taiwan."³¹ The miracle of Tung-Shan was broadcast by the DPP in the county magistrate campaign in 1993 and the provincial governor's election in 1994 to show that they could do a better job of administration for Taiwan than the KMT.³²

Following the success of Tung-Shan River Park, Chen continued to plan other works. Two sports parks were planned under his direction—Ilan Sports Park and Lo Tung Sports Park. The former was finished in 1989, the latter in 1996. They have rather different designs yet both won national recognition as well.

Ilan Park was supervised by Chen Dingnan. It was Taiwan's first park combined with multiple sports facilities. In 1991 the Taiwan Provincial Olympics were held in Ilan. The Ilan sports park won public recognition for its good design. Again Chen was closely involved in the construction process. One story concerned the trees planted in the park; it was said that Chen measured the trees to make sure that each was spaced the same distance and trimmed to the same height. People joked that the perfect arrangement of those trees symbolized the administration style of Chen Dingnan—efficient, perfectionist, and somewhat obsessed with small details.

The second sports park, Lo Tung Park, was planned by Chen Dingnan and finished by the following magistrate, Yu Hsyi-kun. It was designed by Takano, another Japanese landscape company, and became the biggest city park in Taiwan. Soon after its opening, Lo Tung Park and Tung Shan River Park became the two focal tourist sites of Ilan County. As one real estate sign said, Lo Tung Park was the "pride of the Ilan people." The surrounding area soon became the most expensive real estate in the county.

Quite different from Tung Shan River Park's ornamented and manicured style, Lo Tung Park was meant to be more "natural." It is composed of different landscape elements drawn from American wildness, Chinese rockeries, and Taiwanese old streets. Both parks attracted criticism as to whether they truly represented the essence of Taiwanese folk culture.³³

Admiring the vision of the Ilan government, the Elephant firm decided to relocate to Ilan during the construction of Tung Shan River Park. Their second project was the new County Hall, built in 1997. The firm endeavored to search and gather "traditional Minnan architectural elements."³⁴ Their design for the county hall was a three-story building with red bricks, carved wooden windows, long narrow hall ways, a courtyard and garden, all of which were coded elements of the traditional Taiwanese architecture. According to the

architects, there were three principles at work in the design for the building—1. the county hall and its yard must look like a park and serve leisure function; 2. It must appear welcoming to all people; 3. It must symbolize the local culture.³⁵ In order to manifest its locality, the architects emphasized that only raw materials produced in the Ilan County, such as bricks, masonry and lumber were used.

The county hall attracted a lot of attention from journalists, academics, and the public. One author wrote in his biography about Yu Hsyi-kun:

Situated in the geometric center of Lan-yang plain, the Ilan County Hall, built of Qing-shui red bricks and stone walls, and drawing on traditional architecture, has changed the stereotypes of bureaucracy held by common folks.

For a novice tourist, they might think that the three-story building, which is surrounded with a green lawn, decorated porches, winding hallways, and rockeries, is a newly-built five-star hotel. . . .

The county hall, which was finished in the second term of Yu Hsyi-kun, is the best illustration of his political style: instead of authoritarianism, what the county government has is the long lost hospitality and sincerity (which used to be an essential part of Taiwanese folk tradition.) In short, the disposition of the County Hall is closely tied to the main theme of Yu's various policies.³⁶

Following the County Hall, the Elephant firm began its third project in Ilan. Atayal Bridge was built in October of 1997, named after the largest aboriginal group in Ilan to "honor the tribe and to show how we Han people respect other ethnic groups."³⁷ The designers of the bridge took their main inspiration from traditional Atayal symbolism. The blue bow-like road lamp symbolized the bows of Atayal men, whereas the dark orange viewpoints on the sideways imitated the baskets used by Atayal women. Interestingly, the symbolism was drawn from anthropological studies of the Atayal tribe's hunting tradition.

The next project that the firm took, and by far the most controversial and ambitious, was the new Erh-chieh Wanggong Temple. The original Erh-chieh Wanggong Temple, built in 1929, was among the most popular temples in Ilan. Located on the Lan Yang river front, the temple attracted many followers who came to the temple for blessing before crossing the river.

In 1986, the temple committee decided that the old temple was not spacious enough to accommodate its increasing number of followers. They decided to renovate the temple. In the conventional sense, it would have meant to tear down the old building and rebuild a new one at the same location. Also as with most other Taiwanese temple committee, the leaders of the temple took several trips to study the architecture styles of other temples. Finally they decided on a Wanggong temple in Taipei as the model.

for their new construction.

Due to its significance and fame, however, some people contended that the original building characterized an important keystone of temple architecture in Ilan, and thus should be preserved even though it was not a "national registered heritage site." The county government and the cultural office intervened, expressing their concerns over the preservation issue and encouraging the temple committee to find an alternative option to demolishing the whole structure. Magistrate Yu attended the annual meeting for the temple community and expressed his hopes that the new temple design would be distinctive. Yu said, "The renovated temple should have its own characteristics, based on far-sighted vision and enduring materials. We want to give our next generation a cultural property that will last for more than a thousand years."³⁸

Accordingly, the committee decided to open the design selection process. They solicited proposals from professional architects and let the community people make the final decision. In the following year, the Elephant's proposal was approved unanimously in the community meeting. The old temple would be moved and preserved; the model for the new temple was displayed in the community center, with illustrations of the final design. This decision was contentious, however. The unconventional form of the design, which had two curved side-wings and a high-ceiled worship center, did not resemble any of the existing temples in Taiwan. Therefore its authenticity and religious validity came under attack.

According to the designer, they wanted to build a temple in accordance to the local demands. The temple was to be a part of community life. It had to preserve a sense of sacredness, but also be innovative in its cultural form. The designer claimed that the temple was meant to resemble the roundhouse Zhangzhou, which was the "original homeland" in mainland China of most Erh Chieh people. Yet some criticized that the model of the new temple evoked a sense of the Japanese shinto temple.

Interestingly, most criticism of the new temple's innovative design came from outside the community. The local people themselves did not seem to be troubled by the question of authenticity; whether the new architecture fit the image of the traditional Taiwanese temple did not concern them. There were actually three "temples" at the location for the time being. One was the designer's miniature model for the new temple, which was exhibited on the first floor of the community kindergarten. The second was the temporarily emptied old temple, waiting to be remodeled into a community center or museum. The third one was a temporary, poorly constructed building, with more than one hundred deities on the offering table. When I asked the manager of the temple which one was the "real" temple, he gave me an interesting answer: "well, what do you think? There is a Taiwanese

saying that 'wherever there are gods, there is a temple.' Look at these three, which one has gods in it?"

The Elephant's cooperation with community residents was not entirely smooth, however. Upon completing their design of the Temple, the Elephant had wished to impose their aesthetic vision onto the whole community, first through a beautification project of the Erh-chieh Canal and its surrounding green belts, and then proceeding to the street designs. They had planned to relocate to Erh-chieh to carry out their vision of a distinctive Taiwanese community. Yet an opposing voice emerged within the community, mainly from the Erh-chieh Cultural and Educational Promotion Association (*Da Erjie wenjiao cujin hui*) organized by middle-age, non-partisan, community residents. Members of the Association first proposed the canal beautification project in 1996 and later obtained governmental funding for such construction. The Elephant heard of the plan and viewed it as a rare opportunity to implement their vision. The Association however declined the Elephant's intervention. Some core members of the Association commented on several occasions that the Elephant "has taken away our Temple; now they want to take our Canal too!" They told me that the Elephant's envisioning of the community landscape was not quite the same as that of the community people. "The Elephant said they wanted to coordinate the design of the canal with that of the temple; yet what really need to be coordinated are our historical memories, not the lifeless codes of architecture." When the Elephant first contacted the community regarding the Temple project, the residents were rather intimidated by their professional knowledge and thus inclined to agree everything proposed by those architects. "After several years of self-learning, we too can do blueprints now" they proudly declared. The Association thus decided to take full charge of the canal project and chose to cooperate with a different architect firm. "The Elephant has their own imagination of Erh-chieh; their plan was to use the Temple as the center of the community, then develop an all-embracing project of a coordinated community aesthetics; yet the Association feels that this is *their* community, not the Elephant's," explained a young culture worker familiar with community affairs.

ILAN RESIDENTIAL HOUSE PROJECT

In addition to public construction, the county government extended their visions to private residences. As early as Chen Dingnan's time, the county government had already attempted to define the "style" for an Ilan vernacular architecture. In 1995 Magistrate Yu first proposed the "Ilan Residential Housing Project" (*Yilan cuo*). Yu felt that Ilan should develop its own unique architecture in contrast to the homogeneous architectural landscape of Taiwan. "Cultural landscape is the physical representation of a local culture," said Yu. "In order to make Ilan the most cultured, most humanistic, and most

colorful county, we will have to do a lot of work... the Ilan House Project is one of the essential steps in building a new Taiwanese culture."³⁹

After many discussions and meetings with architects, the project of "building Ilan's houses" was proposed. According to the committee, there were several principles to define the "Ilan House:" 1. It must reflect the special geographical situation of Ilan; 2. It must be environmentally friendly; 3. The landscape design must blend well with its natural environment; 4. The construction materials must come from the Ilan county; 5. A sloping roof must be used to adjust to Ilan's rainy climate. In sum, the Ilan House, shaped by its regional cultural flavors, would be the model for a vernacular architecture of Ilan's future.⁴⁰

Ten blueprints were chosen to build the first generation of the "Ilan Houses." Halted by various problems, however, only three of these were actually built. The Kamalan house, owned by a high-school teacher, was probably the most renowned. Its aesthetic idea evoked the images of a disappeared plain aboriginal tribe Kamalan, which inhabited the Ilan region before the Han people arrived.

According to the designer, Taiwan had a different climate from mainland China. During the past thousands of years, the Kamalan people had adapted to the unique climate of the Lan Yang Plain, which was humid and rainy with frequent storms in the summer. Nonetheless, the Kamalan culture and the prevailing architecture style on the plain were destroyed by Han immigrants. "The Han architecture does not reflect the special climate and geography of the Lan Yang plain. I have had to seek out the Kamalan architectural tradition from historical documents and to reconstruct the new Ilan House based on Kamalan's cultural characteristics," said the designer.⁴¹

There are several architectural elements in the house associated with Kamalan symbols: 1. The walls are narrow at bottom and flared out to the pitched roof, which was a design by the Kamalan tribe to avoid heavy rain from permeating into the basement. 2. The "rooster tail" style roof was a modification of the grassy roof of Kamalan houses. 3. The design entailed an outdoor staircase because Kamalan people lived on the second floor, saving the ground floor for their herds.⁴²

The owner of the house was an avid advocate of the Taiwanese nationalist movement. He believed that the "Ilan house is a Taiwanese house. During Taiwan's history there have been six or seven different masters. It is a shame that none of Taiwan's past architectural cultures have had any historical continuity. They changed with every change of ruler. The most unfortunate group of all was the indigenous people. They can't even find any trace of their architectural culture. By building my family house I hope to conduct an experiment in calling public attention to the indigenous culture and to establish a distinctive style for Taiwanese architecture."⁴³

Because of this sense of commitment regarding his house, the owner kept it open to any interested visitor. The second floor of the house was used for a community library. Its collection included books on Taiwanese history and anti-KMT political publications.

It should be noted that the "Ilan residential house project" was a curious combination of both a lost homeland and an unattainable utopia.⁴⁴ By emphasizing the traditional concept of a harmonious relationship between the house and the land, the design elements of the Ilan house emerged as a reaction against the characterless modern high rises. Ironically though, the commodification of land in contemporary Taiwan made the project only affordable for affluent landowners.

These examples of the "New Architecture" have become the icons of Ilan's regional identity and the focal sites for tourist industry. To give visitors a better sense of Ilan's cultural landscape, a "cultural map of Ilan" was produced to promote all the revitalized or newly-built architectural projects sponsored by the county government. This is an example of how architecture could be used to showcase the government's progress. As Holston wrote of the modernist city:

"On the one hand, such an expansion [of the concept of the political to include daily life and especially the home] might open new arenas for political action, involving issues related to residence . . . issues marginal to the traditional political arena . . . In this possibility, the modernist city generates new and subversive political identities among those usually excluded from power. On the other hand, one could view state-sponsored architecture and master planning as new forms of political domination through which the domains of daily life, previously outside the realm of politics, become targets for state intervention."⁴⁵

COMMUNITY-MAKING PROGRAM

Yu once said that the whole county of Ilan was in itself a "big community."⁴⁶ Based on this conviction, he was the most supportive county magistrate of the "Integrated Community-Making Program" implemented by the Council for Cultural Affairs in 1995.⁴⁷ In 1995 and 1996, under the CCA's direction each county in Taiwan was mandated to select one representative community to participate in the annual "National Festival of Cultures and Arts." The Ilan county government broadened the level of participation. It asked each township office to recommend one community. After several discussions, fourteen communities were chosen to be the "seed communities" in this state-sponsored year-long community project.

The enthusiasm of the Ilan county government in embracing CCA's community policy is reminiscent of a similar project in Tono, Japan. Ivy described the efforts of the city council "to create a 'museum-park city' (*hakubutsukoen toshi*) in which small neighborhood centers would double as museums, preserving the varied arts, crafts, artifacts, and narratives of the local. The entire region would, in effect, become a museum. . . ."48 Tono's urban planning was based on the configuration of the city as "the homeland of Japanese ethnology."⁴⁹ Similarly, the Ilan government's earnest support of the state-sponsored community making project was motivated by its self-positioning in Taiwan's regional politics. As stated in a previous chapter, the term "community" had different connotations in different contexts; its degree of geographical inclusiveness varied. Yet, regardless of its location, "community" was always associated with warm, "fuzzy" feelings of belonging and served as reminders of a pre-modern period. Thus, by claiming that Ilan was a big community Yu Hsyi-kun's implicit reference was the impersonal Taipei metropolis. This statement positioned Ilan in a sharp contrast to Taipei, the latter being an industrial, impersonal, and alienated city while the former an agricultural, human-centered, and sustainable landscape. This contrast granted Ilan a unique position in Taiwan's regional politics through which the county government could accumulate cultural capital and reverse its economic decline. Since the concept of community was so central to Ilan's economic revitalization, it thus made perfect sense that its county government transformed CCA's community policy into an integrated, county-wide project.

Ilan's efforts on community building actually began earlier than the implementation of the CCA policy. In the National Cultural Festival of 1994, Ilan used *Guishan* (Turtle Island) as their focus. Turtle Island, a turtle-shape rock island laying offshore, has long been the symbol of Ilan. It is visible from almost every corner of the county and thus its ubiquitous presence has become a frequent trope of longing and returning in the literature of Ilan's native writers.

The Turtle Island was claimed by the military during the 1950s; the original inhabitants were relocated to a coastal village. Over the past four decades no civilian was allowed to land on the island; the county government did not have any control over it either. Therefore the objective of 1994's cultural festival "Come back to us, Guishan!" transmitted the intention of reclaiming this land. The theme of longing for the lost island permeated the program of the festival. *Guishan The Big Turtle* was the symbol for the community attachment of Ilan locals. Yet, its symbolic meaning was further heightened by a sense of its loss and untouchable presence.

In the following year, the government chose to focus on a different community, Yu-tien, which was famous for its traditional lion dancing. The cultural office and the CCA marketed Yu-tien's "rural essence" by publicizing

its community lion-dancing troupes, promoting its agricultural products, renovating a grass-roof hut, and designing a one-day package tour of "country life experience." Additional funding was spent on road paving and "community beautification" (i.e. tree planting and household clean up). Yu-tien was subsequently transformed from an agricultural village to a "model community."⁵⁰ Its national fame was reflected in the real estate market. Soon after the national cultural festival, some developers used Yu-tien to market their housing project in the surrounding areas.

Yu-tien's instantly gained celebrity inspired many other similarly depressed towns and villages in Ilan. In the end of 1995 when the Ilan Cultural Office planned to select a new location for the cultural festival for the following year and called for proposals from township governments, every town expressed a strong interest in participating in the project. It became a county-wide program, involving fourteen communities from every township.

To implement the community-building project, the Ilan county government appointed a professional group, or "planning troupe" composed of architects, urban planners, or scholars, to help each community develop their "local specialty." The goal was to strengthen the locality of each community by "reviving" their distinctive local resources. Ideally those local resources, including handicrafts, huts, farming, and ritual performances, would become the bases for collective celebration, and thus the ground for community identity. Moreover, a consolidated yet diversified "Ilan community" would supposedly emerge from the combination of every distinctive local community.

This idea was manifest in the "Happy Ilan New Year festival" in February 1996. Fourteen "seed communities" presented their local performances in Ilan Sports Park, the ceremonial site for the festival. The result was highly festive. The arrangement of exhibiting communities in the New Year festival deserves further analysis. By exhibiting the community-building results during the New Year season, the most domestic holiday of the year, the Ilan county government and the planning troupes appealed to Ilanese and tourists alike with the idea of homeland.

This community spectacle was developed into the "Community Renaissance Fair" in the next year, which was sponsored by the CCA and executed by the Ilan county government. This time ten communities from Ilan participated in it, along with 15 communities from other counties in Taiwan. The fair was designed to be a "cultural carnival," in which each community would perform their distinctive culture. Three foreign communities, from Germany, Japan, and Seattle (Fremont), were invited to the fair and exchanged their experience and community lives with their counterparts in Taiwan. The fair showed that Taiwan, although being a small island, was a diversified nation. "Various cultures and various industries are presented in the activity of 'Community Day.'"⁵¹

The community fair was the climax of the CCA's community-building efforts. It also called out some underlying uncertainty, however. One of the most pressing changes was that Chen Chi-nan, who was then the deputy director of the CCA and a prominent advocate of the community-building policy, resigned before the fair opening. Therefore a few community activists questioned in the meeting afterward whether the central government would now switch its focus, and how would local communities possibly sustain themselves without being too vulnerable to the constant policy shifts of Taiwan's politics.

The political swings did hit community development in general, yet a positive breakthrough occurred in Ilan's community building process. In September 1997, Chen Chi-nan was appointed to be the chief executive of Yang-shan Cultural Foundation right after his resignation. Chen thought, "Ilan is the place where his dream could be realized."⁵² Therefore he was willing to give up a prestigious official position in favor of a non-governmental foundation.

Statistics show that the Ilan county cultural office received the highest amount of funding from the central government in 1996. Considering the county's small population, this number is impressive. The major reason behind it, I believe, lay in Ilan's commitment to the community-building policy as the primary program of the CCA for several years.

John Pemberton, in his discussion of the "Mini-ization of Indonesia," suggested a similar phenomenon.

"First, local communities are remapped as essentially uniform replicas of a generic village. Although this remapping is, no doubt, part of a colonial bureaucratic legacy that determined the 'Javanese village' as a well-bounded unit within subdistricts within districts, within the New Order's intensely cultural discourse, all villages are imagined to contain, willy-nilly, explicitly ritual events aimed toward the same general end: the preservation of a broader inheritance—of 'Java.' And with this assumption of an underlying 'Javanese' identity comes a recuperated sign of difference, an appearance of 'diversity. . . . The exaggeration of difference itself, thus, becomes a celebrated feature of just the process it would counter."⁵³

Yu's cultural policy successfully transformed Ilan's image from a rustic countryside to a "cultural county" with a livable environment. In an interview Yu proudly said that many people outside of the county had expressed their intention to move to Ilan because it was "the origin of Taiwanese culture."⁵⁴ One of the slogans that the county government used was "Now we have Ilan, you don't have to emigrate to New Zealand!"⁵⁵ Clearly the basic motivation for Yu's cultural policy was to reverse out-migration and attract population through the accumulation of cultural capital and the demonstration of

a sustainable management. There is no research data that reveals the exact number of people attracted to Ilan by its cultural administration despite the fact that professional jobs within the county remained scarce. But the "cultural sectors," including the County Culture Office, foundations, and architecture firms, did create a trend of in-migration. Most of my cultural-worker friends in Ilan were newcomers or return migrants from Taipei. Some of them were successful professionals in Taipei, tired of living an uprooted life style and delighted to have a chance to come home without having to settle for unskilled jobs as did their parents' generation. Their experiences of return were not all positive, however. Some of them soon realized that Ilan's cultural construction was based on political maneuvering and did not really emerge from the "grassroots." Once the political wind changed direction, the policy would soon collapse. The overdependence of the movement on politics and the lack of active public participation overdetermined the fate of Yu's cultural policy. There was a sense of urgency and anxiety among cultural workers toward the end of Yu's term. Once Yu left his position, his policies would surely be modified by his successor. No one was really sure what would happen when the new magistrate took over.

CONFLICTED VISIONS, SPLIT IDENTITIES

Among all the counties of Taiwan, Ilan might be the one most enthusiastic with defining and researching its native authenticity. In 1993, the county government appointed a public relation firm in Taipei to conduct a survey "Who are the Real Ilanese?" Hundreds of questionnaires were disseminated to solicit answers from writers and scholars. The answers were diverse. Some people insisted that Ilan natives, due to the unique geography of their native place, possessed distinctive collective personality characteristics such as being introverted, persevering, and sincere. Yet others disagreed. One interviewee simply stated that there was no such thing as "Ilan characteristics."⁵⁶ Despite such disclaimers, however, the discussion about Ilan's native character frequently occurred in public discourse and private conversations. Even in the late 1990s, when political correctness demanded a more inclusive definition of local identity (e.g. "as long as this person identify with X, he/she is X-nese"), an exclusive or essentialist point of view still slipped into daily conversations. One local historian once commented that "the county government should appoint more native intellectuals to counter the predominance of 'outsiders' in most cultural plans."⁵⁷ The "outsiders" referred to here included those who were born outside but had resided in Ilan for ten or even twenty years. Conversely, those who were born in Ilan yet had permanently relocated to other places would still be seen as "authentic Ilanese." In this sense, the definition of Ilanese paralleled the fundamentalist view of the Taiwanese in the 80s.⁵⁸

Interestingly, many “authentic Ilanese” did not feel prideful about their “cultural county” as much as those “outsiders” did. For example, on April 13, 2000 the China Times published a letter entitled “Salute to the Ilanese demeanor; let’s learn from them.” The author praised the “democratic attitude” of Ilan politicians and urged the readers to learn from them.⁵⁹ The next day, however, an civil servant from Ilan responded by saying, “we Ilan natives probably feel differently about our county than outsiders, whose perception of Ilan comes only from the promotion of mass media . . . Ilan’s economic construction is falling behind other regions; many residents are actually considering voting for a different party in next election.”⁶⁰

During my six months of fieldwork, I heard both positive and negative views regarding the culture-oriented policy of Magistrate Yu. The debate reached its climax during the county magistrate campaign. The KMT campaign attacked Yu’s policy, also assumed to be the general policy of DPP, as being superficial and showy. As one poster criticized, Ilan could not afford the luxury of those cultural activities because Ilan county did not have any significant industry and enough income tax to support them. Ilan was not just a “backyard garden” for urban tourists for weekend consumption, it said. Ilan needed to have its own infrastructure and a solid industrial and business base to “keep the Ilan youth in our homeland.”

The attacks seemed effective. Although the DPP candidate won the campaign, many people told me that for the first time in sixteen years they actually took seriously the KMT campaign slogans. One small businessman in his early thirties told me, in an angry tone, that the image of beautiful Ilan was created by a bunch of outsiders who desired to realize their fantasy and did not listen to the voices from the bottom. Even within the elite there were conflicts. In a conference on Ilan’s architecture movement, a local architect questioned why most of the significant architecture projects were taken by the architects from outside. He asked, “Is this really Ilan’s local movement . . . ? Why are there so few *local* architects involved?”⁶¹

Despite those challenges, however, an equally significant proportion of people showed their gratitude towards the changes. One woman in her mid-twenties said that she really felt proud of her home county:

“Ilan is really unique. When I was in college in Taipei, we knew that the students from Ilan were especially *tuanjie* (unified). . . . Compared to people from Hua-lien and Taitung, Ilan people feel a stronger sense of local pride. Many of my friends from Hualien have told me how envious they feel of Ilan locals. Ilan has so many distinctive constructions whereas there are virtually none visible in Huan-lien and Taitung.”

Another woman in her mid-thirties said that she feels pride whenever visited by friends from other places:

“Whenever I take friends to Lo Tung sports park I feel so proud. My friends would lament that they don’t have any comparable places for leisure activities in Taipei. They wished they would have been born in Ilan to enjoy such a beautiful place.”

Statistics showed that Ilan people had a stronger sense of local identity than those in other counties. According to a poll made in 1997, 76.3% of Ilan residents felt a sense of pride regarding their homeland; 72% were satisfied with their county magistrate; 50.9% thought Ilan had the best quality of life—the best evaluation given to all the counties surveyed.⁶²

In responding to the positive feedback, Magistrate Yu proudly said:

Our insistence on environmentalism, tourism, and culture have helped to invigorate the local industry. The increase of tourists has brought Ilan prosperity. . . . These policies have been a great asset in the promotion of Ilan’s fame. Now many people have quite a changed view of Ilan. . . . The trajectory of Ilan county is toward a better quality of life.⁶³

One architect who grew up in Taipei and received a master’s degree from Yale University explained his choice of settling down in Ilan: “This place offers the feeling of living in a fully realized life.”⁶⁴ Similar comments came from a county official. He gave up his job in Taipei, moved back into his old family home, and enjoyed the simple rural life in Ilan where he was able to go swimming every morning before starting work. He felt that environmental quality was more important than the amount of money one makes; apparently many county residents shared this view. Therefore despite the many aspects of “underdevelopment”—low public budget, low average income, zero growth population, lack of a four-year university, etc.—a majority of county residents felt that Ilan was the best place to live in Taiwan.

Local bureaucrats were especially proud of their accomplishments. During the first month of my work with the cultural office, I had been taken to the spots discussed in this chapter several times. On one occasion, when we drove to Atayal Bridge, an official noticed that some light bulbs on the bridge were missing. He complained that such things would have never happened under Yu’s administration. He said that the uniqueness of Ilan did not derive from its natural beauty, which was more prominent in Hua-lien and Taitung. Instead what made Ilan so great was its efficient bureaucracy and administrations. Inspired by the two former magistrates, professionals involved in the culture renovation of Ilan felt that this was the place where their dreams could be fulfilled. Therefore although Ilan was not the birthplace of all the professionals participating in the project, some of them had decided to make this place their permanent home.

CREATING THE CANON OF ILAN CULTURE

On a sunny day in August, an American friend visited me in Su-ao, the southernmost town of Ilan county. While waiting for the train to Taipei, an old man approached us. It was probably our foreignness that attracted him. He greeted us and asked whether we had visited some of the places in Ilan. I asked him where the best spot would be in the county. He answered that Tung Shan River Park is a must-see. Yet he added: "There are lots of beautiful places in our Ilan. It is such an honor to be born in this place."

It was near the end of my six months of fieldwork. As my "foreignness" faded I had been hearing more and more complaints about the official construction. Yet hearing the old man speak truly changed my perspective. It seemed that the visual images of the place making movement were less a representation of a unique Ilan culture than they were the demarcation of one place from the outsiders. Like the oft-heard complaint that Tung Shan River Park did not belong to Ilan but to outside tourists, Ilan's identity did not build on any explicit unique visual culture but was based on its differentiation from the outside.

Although the whole project seemed to have aroused more appreciation from the outside than from county residents, local bureaucrats were actually working on consolidating a canon for the "new Ilan culture." In May of 1998, I was involved in an interpreter-training program for the International Folklore and Folkgame Festival to be held that summer. My job was to test college students in English about their knowledge of Ilan. All of them were born in Ilan, but they all went to university elsewhere because there is no university in the county. One of my questions was designed to test their understanding of the "recent cultural accomplishments" of Ilan. To my surprise, only a few students had learned or heard about the new architectural movement. About one quarter of them could not name any of the new projects built by the county government over the past eight years. The only place they all knew was Tung Shan River Park, the site for the Folklore Festival.

When I reported this disappointing result to officials in Cultural Office, they said that they didn't expect a high performance in that regard. Instead, they wanted to use the opportunity to educate young students about the achievements of the county government. "Those kids should improve their knowledge of the county government's efforts on creating a new culture. Then, when foreign visitors ask about that, they won't be embarrassed. They also have to know where the best places are in Ilan to show to the foreigners." Based at the guideline, the training program would include some factual memorization of the projects built in recent years.

"Building a County of Life" was the title for the five-year development project for Ilan's cultural office. Throughout the collaboration process I realized that the local bureaucrats were less interested in the past glories. Rather, they were more anxious about the future. What will Ilan be in the

next century? The question was often raised during our meetings. This future orientation was also demonstrated by the biggest annual event of the county—the International Folklore and Folkgame Festival. "Children, Our Hope for the Future" said the pamphlet of the Festival. "(By hosting the Festival) the Ilan County Government hopes to build a paradise for children combining traditional arts and modern cultural resources." Because of the difficulty of claiming one cultural heritage over the others, the elite had to give up the hope that they could find any unifying force for the Taiwan nation drawn from the past. Instead, the imaginary has to be projected in the future. As Jennifer Robertson wrote in the Japan context, "The making of Kodaira today largely is a process of remaking the past and imagining the future—a process of reifying a Kodaira of yesterday to serve as a stable referent of and model for an 'authentic' community today and tomorrow."⁶⁵

Robertson criticized Japan's *furusato* as "a dominant trope deployed at the national level by the state to both regulate the imagination of the nation and contain the local."⁶⁶ Similarly, while in Ilan the county as a whole was modeled into *the* authentic community for Taiwan, various neighborhoods within the county became showcases for its community project. In the next chapter I will move onto one of those "seed communities" and examine how the politics of nostalgia operated at the most grassroots level.

NOTES

¹ Chen Chi-nan, "Preface," in Chen Gengyao, *Wenhua Ilan Yu Hsyi-Kun [Cultural Ilan and Yu Hsyi-Kun]* (Taipei: Yuan Liu Publisher, 1998), 3.

² Chen became the executive director of Yang Shan Cultural Foundation in Ilan in September 1997, but resigned in April 1998.

³ Chen Gengyao, 23.

⁴ Edwin A. Winckler, "Cultural Politics on Postwar Taiwan," in Stevan Harrell and Huang Chun-chieh, eds., *Cultural Change in Postwar Taiwan* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994), 22.

⁵ Winckler defines direct cultural policy as "cultural management or cultural programs."

⁶ Huang Guozhen called the Ilan county government a "local state apparatus." See Huang, *Diyu guojia de xingcheng [Formation of a Localized State]* (Master thesis, National Taiwan University, 1998).

⁷ Interview of Ms. Shi Yaru, Ilan, June 1998.

⁸ The road project was resumed in 1997 and is still in construction.

⁹ See, for example, Choi Chungmoo, "The Discourse of Decolonization and Popular Memory," *Positions* 1 (1993), 77–102.

¹⁰ According to Chen Gengyao, 67 out of 101 public schools participated in this project in 1997.

¹¹ One school decided to teach the famous waist-drum dancing of northern Shaanxi, and appointed a mainland Chinese immigrant dancer to be the teacher. This decision was widely criticized by a county-based magazine and some county

councilmen for waist-drum dancing was not "Taiwanese folk art." See Chen Gengyao, 86.

¹² *Ilan*, 9.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹⁴ *Dongshan He [Tung Shan River]* (Taichung: Taiwan Teacher's Association, 1994).

¹⁵ Idea inspired by Robertson, 5.

¹⁶ Quoted from Yu's talk at the opening ceremony of the County History Library, 1993.

¹⁷ Lisa Yoneyama, *Hiroshima Traces: Time, Space, and the Dialectics of Memory* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 34.

¹⁸ This caused a controversy among different social groups in Ilan, whether Ilan's history only began with the Han settlement.

¹⁹ Chen Gengyao, 128.

²⁰ Rutheiser, *Imagineering Atlanta*, 19–20.

²¹ Because of its shorter history of Han settlement in comparison to the other old towns in Taiwan, Ilan only has one historical site designated by the central government. Therefore, to preserve the "significant historical buildings specific to Ilan's local history," the county government collaborated with the Urban Planning Foundation to preserve and promote a few architectural sites in the county. Their original plan would have included 35 sites, yet the only one worked out was The Museum of Ilan's Political Settlement.

²² *Ilan shezhi jinian guan [Documentary of the Establishment of the Museum of Ilan's Political Settlement]* (Ilan: The Memorial Hall of Ilan's Political Settlements).

²³ Chen Chi-nan, *Minsheng Bao* January 14, 1998. The article was initiated by the criticism of the architect of the museum, Han Baode. Han criticized the new temple of Erh Chieh as a "transplanted aesthetics from Japan." Han uses Erh Chieh as an example to illustrate his doubts about Ilan's recent achievement in community revitalization and public construction. He said that "many Japanese elements were transplanted into Ilan under the disguises of Xiangtu yet most people were not aware of it.... the rebuilding of Erh-Chieh temple further indicates the mimicry of Japanese festivals." see Han 1998.

²⁴ *Ilan shezhi jinian guan*.

²⁵ Novell, 8.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 6.

²⁸ Clifford Geertz, "Afterword," in Feld and Basso eds., 261.

²⁹ See *Yuan Chien magazine*.

³⁰ Ironically most of the local bureaucrats were KMT members when Chen ruled the county. Also, a significant proportion of the budget for the park came from central government as Ilan was not able to support itself solely by the local taxation. Yet critics seemed to ignore the fact.

³¹ *Dongshan He*.

³² Although Chen has never been a KMT member, he had not joined the opposition party DPP either until July of 1993. Therefore throughout his eight-year term of Ilan magistrate, he had been an independent politician. Nonetheless, the DPP constantly appropriated Chen's accomplishments as a success in anti-KMT political movement.

³³ See Tien Chu-chin. Tung Shan Park has also been criticized as too "Japanese," in the sense that it incorporated too many artistic elements and made the landscape very "artificial."

³⁴ Notes from "Ilan New Architecture Movement" conference, Ilan: Dec 13, 1997.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Lin Zhiheng, *Lanyang zhi zi You Xikun [The Son of the Langyang Plain—Yu Hsyi-kun]* (Taipei: Tianxia Publisher, 1998), 19–20.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 238.

³⁸ *Erh-chieh Feng Qing*, 19.

³⁹ Preface to *Ilan cuo tuji (The Collection of the Blueprints of the Ilan Houses)* (Ilan: Ilan County Government, 1997).

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ Notes from the "Ilan New Architectural Movement Conference," Ilan, Dec 12–13, 1997.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ Idea inspired by Ivy's discussion of the city planning of Tono. See Ivy, chapter 4.

⁴⁵ James Holton, *The Modernist City: An Anthropology Critique of Brasilia* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1989).

⁴⁶ Chen Gengyao, 34

⁴⁷ The details of the "Integrated Community-Making Policy" are described in chapter 2.

⁴⁸ Ivy, 102.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Community database and interview records*, 58.

⁵¹ Chen Gengyao, 332.

⁵² *Ibid.* 305.

⁵³ John Pemberton, *On the Subject of "Java"* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 238–239

⁵⁴ *Yuan Chien Magazine*.

⁵⁵ New Zealand was used here, instead of the US, because its placename *Niuxilan* rhymes with Ilan (*Yilan*) in Chinese. Also New Zealand was the second favorite country—next to the US—of immigration for Taiwanese people.

⁵⁶ Huang Guozhen.

⁵⁷ Conversation, June 1998.

⁵⁸ As some have noted, the "native place" or tongxiang, signifies an important marker for people to formulate their local identity in Taiwan. In big cities such as Taipei and Kaohsiung, migrants from other counties form their native-place organizations (*tongxianghui*), which often play an important role in political mobilization. Native-place student clubs are also active in universities. In Ilan's case, lanyouhui (Ilan student club) exists in every major university and provides network for migrants from Ilan. For a thorough discussion on the native-place sentiment and its social functions in cities, see Bryna Goodman, *Native Place, City, and Nation: Regional Networks and Identities in Shanghai, 1853–1937* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 1995).

⁵⁹ Chen Xinyan, "Yilanren fengfan, dajia duo xuexi," *China Times*, Apr 13, 2000.

⁶⁰ Li Jinshan, "Minzhong kengei jihui, gedi douyou qingliu" China Times, Apr. 15, 2000.

⁶² Rutheiser, 40.

⁶¹ Notes from "New Architectural Movement."

⁶² *Yuan Chien Magazine*.

⁶³ *Yuan Chien*, November 15, 1995, 100-101.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 76.

⁶⁵ Robertson, 5.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 9.

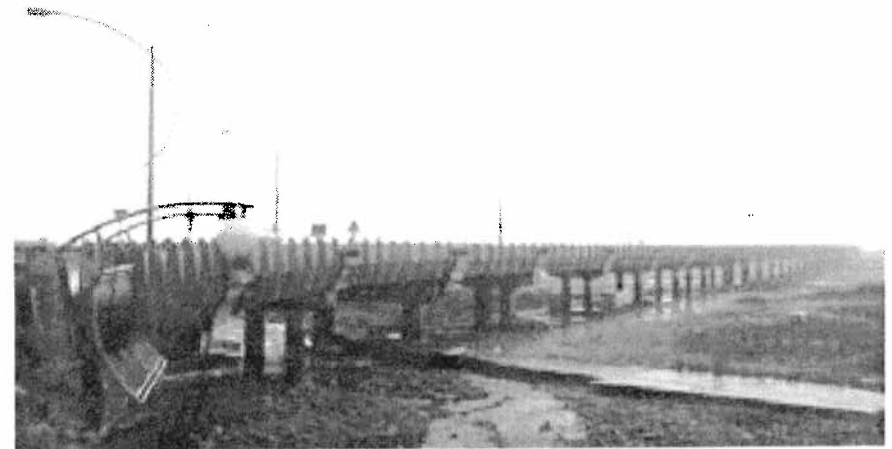


Fig. 1. Atayal Bridge

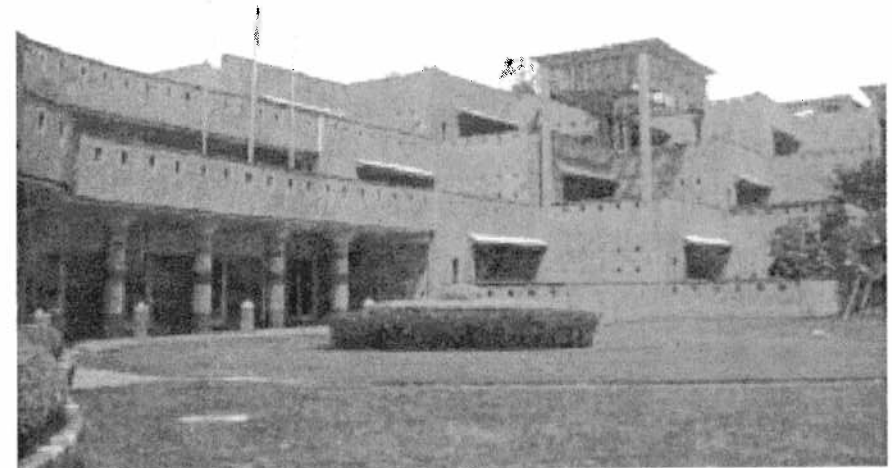


Fig. 2. the Ilan County Hall



Fig. 3. Minnan-style Roof Garden, the Ilan County Hall



Fig. 4. Erh-Chieh Temple, after Relocation



Fig. 5. The Kamalan House (I)



Fig. 6. The Kamalan House (II)



Fig. 7. The Museum of Ilan's Political Settlement

CHAPTER 5

SEARCHING FOR AN AUTHENTIC COMMUNITY

IN LAST CHAPTER I HAVE DESCRIBED THE COMMUNITY-MAKING POLICY OF ILAN County, in which fourteen “seed communities” were chosen in 1995 to develop their local specialty through the professional assistance of government officials and architects. In this chapter I demonstrate how this project operated in Baimi, a stone-mining neighborhood of Suao Township.¹ Since the state advanced its “Integrated Community Making Program” (*Shequ Zongti Yingzao*, hereafter SZY) in 1995, Baimi has often been praised as the most active community in Ilan County.² In describing the outcomes, the contentions, and the aspirations involved in Baimi’s community building process, this chapter examines how different forces from national, county, and local levels have intersected in a specific locale. Through “collective effort,” a community named “Baimi” emerged in Taiwan’s cultural landscape in the late 1990s.

INVENTION OF “LOCAL CULTURE”

It was the afternoon of August 8, 1998; from every aspect it seemed like any other ordinary summer day in Baimi. The road was dusty as usual; heavy trucks frequently passed by, loaded with limestone or oil. Once in a while the regular rhythm of the grinding machines in the stone-powder factory across from the community association building would be interrupted by the whistles of the cargo trains from about a mile away. One elderly resident stepped into the air-conditioned office to photocopy his personal documents, and to enjoy the precious cool and calming space in this steaming area. On the couch inside the office however, four community activists and an anthropologist were discussing an urgent request made to this small volunteer organization: They had just received phone calls from the