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Transforming Frontiers: The Imagined Geography of Taiwan's Internal Frontiers in Postwar Indigenous Films

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Abstract

This article is a study of the 'imagined geography' of Taiwan's alpine, plains, and island frontiers in two dozen films featuring indigenous peoples. I make the following observations and arguments: Many pre-1987 alpine films were produced by government studios, which tried to turn the indigenous high mountain frontier into a Chinese national space. The plains frontier did not feature in cultural production until the 1980s, in two films made by mainlanders in response to the rise of Taiwanese nationalism. Taiwan's island frontier (Orchid Island) has been consistently exoticized to promote tourism. Yet all three frontiers have undergone a process of representational Sinicization and Indigenization, with a corresponding shift in the agency of transformation, from center to frontier. The shift takes place around the lifting of Martial Law in 1987. In pre-1987 films, Chinese settlers transform frontier landscapes and indigenous peoples, while in post-1987 films, indigenous frontier landscapes transform Chinese (or Taiwanese) visitors, making them start to reflect on their way of life.

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Introduction: The History of the Imagined Geography of Frontier Taiwan

This study of landscape representation in postwar Taiwan indigenous film begins with Emma Teng's notion of "imagined geography" (2004: 15-17), which invokes both Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* and Edward Said's 'imaginative geography.' The mention of Anderson suggests the importance of imagined geography to the formation of a national community; a nation is constituted partly by imagining a common national landscape. The mention of Said suggests that an imagined geography may be a means of manipulating people's understanding of their place in the world via oppositions of self and other. The spirits of both Anderson and Said have inspired my own understanding of 'imagined geography' in postwar Taiwan indigenous film: different agents, both public and private, have tried in film to create an imagined geography of Taiwan, to instill a sense of Chinese national pride in the development of the landscape under Martial Law and to critique this same notion of development after Martial Law was lifted.

Emma Teng applied the notion of imagined geography to the study of Qing-era literati-official writings about Taiwan's "frontier" (Teng 2004: 1 and throughout) landscapes. Objectively or physically, a frontier is a borderland, an area off the map or beyond state control. But subjectively or mentally, a frontier is imagined.[2] As Teng shows, the way it is imagined can change over time. In Taiwan, the frontier was Sinicized in literati-official writings from the 17th to the 19th centuries. Initial representations, such as the famous travelogue

[2] By 'imagined,' the reader should understand 'represented.' To imagine something is to create a mental representation of it. No mental representation is exact, and the landscapes presented as national in indigenous films were certainly romanticized. But even so, the landscapes in question were not simply 'imaginary.'

by Yu Yonghe, were negative. Yu Yonghe wrote of horrid clumps of bamboo, cobras snoring like cows and snakes flying like arrows (Teng, 2004: 85). At the time, Taiwan was often considered "unsuited for agriculture" (Teng, 2004: 85). But within decades early impressions yielded to new ones. A local gazetteer argued that the *qi* 氣, the vital energy, of the land was unruly but powerful: it would be dangerous if "obstructed," but Chinese settlers could give it an "outlet" (Teng, 2004: 98). An agricultural frontier for the rest of the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century, Taiwan became a tea frontier in the second half of the nineteenth century. Representations changed accordingly. Taiwan became a land of "Green Gold" (Teng, 2004: 212). By that time, Taiwan's western plains had been 'civilized," along with some of the indigenous people living there. The civilized indigenous people were termed 'cooked savages' (*shoufan* 熟番), as opposed to the uncivilized, 'raw savages' (*shengfan* 生番) in the mountains. This binary, cooked and raw, seems to correspond to other binaries, namely rhetorics of primitivism and privation (Teng, 2004: 62), ethnic versus racialist discourses (Teng, 2004: 105-121), and gender – the cooked savages were feminized, the raw masculinized (Teng, 2004: 173-193).

During the Japanese period (1895-1945), especially in the early 1910s, Taiwan's high mountain tribes submitted to the Japanese. The Wushe Incident in 1930, in which Mona Rudao led an attack on a group of Japanese colonizers in central Taiwan, did not reverse this trend. Following the subjugation of the people of the high mountain region, who were renamed the Takasago (an old Japanese term for Taiwan), the land itself could be civilized, i.e., developed. Not surprisingly, the Japanese authorities wanted to publicize their accomplishment via the most effective means of dissemination. Although imagined geography can be represented textually, in myths about the peach

blossom spring or poems about the bleak northern frontier, a visual representation, which does not require any book learning to appreciate, has a wider appeal. Hence, film becomes a privileged site for the representation of landscape to a mass audience. The Japanese colonizers displayed the results of the civilization of the high mountain region of Taiwan in the propaganda film *Sayon no Kane* (Bell of Sayon) (Hiroshi Shimizu 清水宏, 1943). *Bell of Sayon* tells the story of the Atayal maiden Sayon, who in 1938 tried to carry a Japanese teacher's luggage across a river during a storm but fell into the water and drowned. Three years after her death, in 1941, the governor general celebrated Sayon's sacrifice, and then in 1943 her story was made into a movie, partly to celebrate Japanese governance, partly to call the Taiwanese people, including Taiwanese indigenous people, to arms.

In the film, the Japanese have allowed the Atayal people to continue certain cultural practices, like a dance that circles around a roaring fire, which audiences would expect to see in an indigenous film, but they have also civilized the people according to the Japanese interpretation of civilization at the time: in one scene the whole village is shown bowing to the Japanese flag. The landscape, too, has been civilized. The triumphs of modern technology, both bridges and buildings, coexist with bucolic scenes of people living in harmony with the hills. Sayon leads the village children and a pig on a trek. In another scene she herds ducks and sings songs, as if the Atayal villagers spend all their time at play. In still another scene, however, the villagers are shown, under the supervision of a Japanese official, moving rocks in order to ready the land for cultivation. The alpine landscape is a modern rural place under Japanese control. In her article on *Bell of Sayon*, Lin Pei-yin attends to the representation of the landscape, proposing that, "the empty lake in the final scene" implies "how quickly the life pattern of the Atayal people would

disappear under the coercive project of empire-building" (2011: 152). Lin might have also noted that in the scene right before that of the empty lake, Sayon's memorial service, there is a Japanese-style graveyard with steles erected in honor of the dead, especially Sayon. The Atayal traditionally bury the dead beneath the home. In the film, Atayal culture has begun to pass away, leaving behind a landscape that is culturally Japanese.

The Imagined Geography of the Frontier in Postwar Taiwan

Lin Pei-yin's proposal might seem prophetic of the fate of Taiwan's indigenous people under colonialism, either Japanese colonialism or Chinese settler colonialism after World War Two. But while after the war (when the Chinese Nationalist Party or Kuomintang took control of Taiwan) Sayon's people moved down to the plains and underwent Sinicization at school (i.e., they were given Chinese names, taught in Mandarin Chinese, discouraged from speaking their mother tongues, and forced to wear mandated uniforms), Sinicization was never total, and has, since 1987, been followed by Indigenization. As a result, the villages to which Sayon's people moved in the 1950s and 1960s are today recognizably Atayal (with likenesses of warriors and distinctive decorative designs in public spaces). The prophecy made at the end of *Bell of Sayon* has in other words proven less than prophetic. This article is an account of the prophecy's failure.

More specifically, this article is an effort to build on Emma Teng's research by understanding how Taiwan's frontier landscapes have been represented in film in the postwar period. But while the foundation Teng has

laid is firm, it is not in itself adequate, because of cultural globalization. Postwar indigenous films may be inspired by pre-modern Chinese colonial discourses and literati-official genres as discussed by Emma Teng. We can even discuss postwar indigenous film using Teng's terminology. Indigenous people in postwar films tend to be cooked rather than raw. They were understood as ethnic groups who might be civilized rather than racial groups resistant to civilization. Indigenous people have tended to be feminized in Martial Law era films, in that the films focus on indigenous maidens, who seemed easier to assimilate and provided more possibilities for romance, and tend to portray indigenous males as weak. There is some primitivism in postwar films, but Chinese culture is invariably presented as superior up until 1987. However, a scholar of postwar indigenous film needs to consider a lot of other influences, including not only nationalism, fascism, multiculturalism, and rights movements including the indigenous rights movement but also Western cultural symbolism. For instance, the association between women's bodies and landscape features. Emma Teng explains: "Qing colonial discourse does not represent the colonized land itself as metaphorically feminine or virgin," so that "[e]xploration and conquest, in turn, are not figured as sexualized acts of penetration and possession" (2004: 174). The originally western association of women and landscape was imported to Taiwan in the postwar period, and is conspicuous in indigenous films.[3] For instance, in *The Heroic Pioneers*, an indigenous princess appears for the first time by a stream in a valley. She is waiting there for her boyfriend, the son of a Chinese man

[3] Stories about indigenous women and settler men in Taiwan, as in the United States (for instance, John Rolfe and Pocahontas), were interpreted as national myths or foundational fictions. For a study of the representation of indigenous women and settler men in postwar cultural production in Taiwan, please see my "Romancing the Formosan Aborigine" (Stερk, 2009). See also Lin (2011: 154–159) and Hong (2011: 50–52).

who will settle the land, including the valley. The association between women's bodies and landscape becomes a double-edged sword when the romantic or erotic feelings are not mutual. For instance, the attempted rape in *Rite of Winter*, discussed below, can be read as an offense against the land: loggers are akin to rapists. In addition to western symbolism, a scholar of indigenous film would also need to consider western genres, beginning with the American Western film. In American Westerns, the forces of justice were pitted against the forces of chaos in scenes where the cowboys fought the Indians. By contrast, Taiwanese frontier films are much more peaceful: the settlers were not pitted against the indigenous people to the same extent. The Taiwanese frontier ends up seeming much easier to civilize than America's in cultural production. Another genre to consider would be the South Sea film, as there seems to be a lot of *South Pacific in The Song of Orchid Island*. However, I do not attempt a detailed analysis of the influence of western genres on Taiwan indigenous films in this article. This article is simply an attempt to situate Taiwan's indigenous films in the local sociopolitical history in relation to a topic, landscape representation, that seems inherently important in times of global warming and environmental degradation.

Based on landscape, I adopt an ad hoc typology of three kinds of frontier in the films: alpine, plains, and island. Specifically, I study filmic depictions of the central mountain range, Taiwan's flatlands along the west-central and northeast coasts, and Orchid Island. These areas have long been portrayed as unfamiliar places by Chinese film directors, who have almost always included a scene of passage that marks entry into or exit from an area that, for both the protagonists and the audience, is 'off the map.' Such scenes of passage feature bridges (*Brother Wang and Brother Liu Tour Taiwan, On Mount Hehuan, Winter Ritual, Seediq Bale, etc.*), tunnels (*Song of the Spirits*), trains (*My

Secret Memory, A Lily in the Valley, Winter Ritual), even covered wagon trains (*The Pioneers and The Heroic Pioneers*), and ferries or planes (*Song of Orchid Island, Fishing Luck, Pongso no Tao*). Such scenes mark passage into the frontier. I argue for an overall trend in the films, that, up until 1987, when Martial Law was lifted, Taiwan's internal frontiers were in indigenous films gradually Sinicized. By watching the films, Chinese audiences were familiarized with frontier landscapes. In Yi-fu Tuan's terms, frontier landscapes became places where before they had been spaces. Taiwan's frontier landscapes became recognizably Chinese places. In the process, they ceased to be frontiers; thus, the frontier closed. But since 1987, Taiwan's alpine, plains, and island landscapes have in films become culturally indigenous again. To the extent that these landscapes lost frontier status before 1987, they have become frontiers again since 1987. They have certainly not become wild frontiers, but rather experiential frontiers, frontiers from the perspective of visitors weary of modern Chinese (or Taiwanese) city life, places to experience indigenous culture.

We should pause here to reflect on what is meant by 'Chinese' and 'indigenous.' I assume that terms such as 'Chinese' and 'indigenous' do not correspond to things so much as construct things, i.e., objects of cognition and thought. On this view, everything is a construct, 'Chinese' and 'indigenous' included. People have had very different ideas about what 'Chinese' means and what 'indigenous' means. I understand these terms to be moving targets that different agents have launched in different directions to further various agendas. The construction of Chineseness in the 1950s and 1960s was often technologically modern (according to the standards of the day) and Christian, drawing on the Methodism of Chiang Kai-shek and his wife. As for 'indigenous,' Taiwan's indigenous peoples have been called by many names,

indigenous being one of the most recent. They were raw and cooked savages in the Qing, Takasago in the Japanese era, and 'mountain compatriots' (*shandi tongbao* 山地同胞) under Martial Law (1949-1987). It was not until the late 1980s that a translation for 'indigenous' (*yuanzhumin* 原住民) was introduced into Chinese. Ethnic categories like Atayal and Amis were formalized first in the Japanese era, have increased in number from eight to sixteen, and are a matter of debate. These categories are debatable in part because, since 1987, indigenous people have had more say in how they are to be named and what those names mean. I am not arguing that indigenous people did not self-define before 1987, just that since then, indigenous people have taken an active role in 'constructing' their own cultural identities, which might have linguistic, practical, ritual and geographical dimensions. Indigenous people may claim to be 'traditional,' but any tradition is itself a construct that has to be understood in its context. One cannot simply go back to the past; in cultural history there is no going back. More practically, in this article I assume that what is meant by Chinese and indigenous will be clear in context, that, for instance, if a girl in a film made in the late 1950s is wearing a *cheongsam* (attire), planting cabbage (food) and speaking Chinese (language) she is being presented as 'Chinese.' One might wish for feature films to educate the public by historicizing identity, but the feature film, as a relatively expensive form of representation that cannot afford to alienate potential viewers, usually presents people unproblematically in terms that are easily understood. Certainly the films discussed in this article do.

With these caveats in mind, given what we known about the Taiwan's cultural history in the postwar period, it is hardly surprising that frontier representations should have Sinicized under Martial Law and Indigenized since. State policy under Martial Law was to project a Chinese identity upon

the whole country, including indigenous people. While Native American activists challenged US settler assimilationist ideology in the 1960s, no similar indigenous resistance movement emerged in Taiwan until almost a decade after 1975, the year of Chiang Kai-shek's death. In the 1980s, under the less repressive – 'soft authoritarian' – rule of Chiang Kai-shek's son Chiang Ching-kuo, an indigenous resistance movement appeared. Some radical activists demanded the Han Chinese people 'return our land' (*huanwo tudi* 還我土地), while moderates focused on preserving and celebrating indigenous cultures. At about the same time, Taiwanese intellectuals embraced multiculturalism, advancing the idea that Taiwan was not solely Chinese, but composed of four major demographic groups: Chinese, Taiwanese, Hakka, and Indigenous.[4] Although many indigenous people now live in cities, the 'frontiers' have remained relatively indigenous, and have become more overtly indigenous since 1987. At the same time, Taiwan's indigenous peoples have become Taiwanese icons, symbolic of what makes Taiwan distinctive. Some more extreme Taiwanese nationalists have even identified with the indigenous people as a way of denying their Chineseness (Brown, 2004).

Although the Sinicization and Indigenization of Taiwan's frontiers in film seems easy to explain, it is not immediately obvious why the frontier was represented so often, in a dozen film, in the 1960s and 1970s when Taiwan was undergoing mass urbanization. Were so many frontier films made just because people wanted to see exotic people and scenery? The exoticism is surely part of the appeal, but not the whole story, because, as I argue in this

[4] I adopt this terminology as a convenience, though I do not of course wish to imply that this terminology of 'Taiwanese,' 'Mainlanders,' 'Hakka,' and 'Indigenous' are unproblematic, or that Mainlanders, Hakka, and Indigenous people are not Taiwanese in the wider sense of the term, i.e., citizens of Taiwan.

article, the exotic became familiar (i.e., unexotic) in Martial Law era indigenous films. I propose that filmmakers have made films about Taiwan's frontiers because they thought, or wanted people to think, that the frontier mattered to national identity. In making this claim, I am adapting the Turner thesis to Taiwan. In 1893, the American historian Frederick Jackson Turner described the recently "closed" frontier as the "crucible" in which America's exceptional character – egalitarian, free spirited, self-reliant – had been forged, fusing a new "mixed race, English in neither nationality nor characteristics" (1998: 47). It is not the purpose of this article to argue that the Turner thesis is correct for the American case, or that the frontier experience in Taiwan created a new mixed race, Chinese in neither nationality nor characteristics, as certain Taiwanese nationalists might like to think. Rather, I wish to explore the notion of the frontier as a symbolic site of national transformation. The filmmakers who shot indigenous films under Martial Law portrayed the triumphant Sinicization of the frontier as a way of proving that Taiwan was becoming a modern Chinese nation. Filmmakers who have shot the frontier since 1987, on the other hand, have seen the frontier as the agent of transformation: in their films, the frontier is indigenous, and rather than transforming the frontier, Chinese or Taiwanese visitors to the frontier are transformed by the experience of the frontier.

Though I hope to have brought a fresh, geographical focus to the study of postwar indigenous film, I am certainly not the first to study it. Li Daoming wrote an early article (1994) on the ethnically erroneous representations of the Tsou people of Alishan. Yang Huanhong (2007) studied how political ideology has warped the representation of indigenous peoples. In English language scholarship, Vanessa Frangville (2011) takes three recent films, including *Fishing Luck*, to task for a failure to tackle the political realities of life in

contemporary indigenous villages. Most scholars are interested in how commerce or politics compromises the realistic portrayal of indigenous peoples or conspires to manipulate audiences. Anita Chang (2009)'s approach is closest to my own; Chang studies Orchid Island as a site of primitivist fantasy in the recent commercial film *Fishing Luck*. But rather than discuss a single film, I have chosen to go broad, to cover landscape representation in as many postwar indigenous films as possible. I adopt a bird's-eye perspective on indigenous film, in order to argue that, beyond Sinicization and Indigenization, filmmakers have in indigenous film been articulating their ideals of human-landscape relations. My ultimate interest is not just in the cultural identity of landscape, but also in culturally-specific ways of operating in and upon the landscape that indigenous film might help us to imagine.

As this study mentions almost two dozen films, the reader may wish to consult the appendix, a table with the basic information about each of the films, while reading the following discussions of alpine, plains, and island frontier representation.

Taiwan's Alpine Frontier in Postwar Indigenous Film

The Taiwanese language film *Wang Ge Liu Ge You Taiwan* 王哥柳哥遊臺灣 (Brother Wang and Brother Liu Tour Taiwan) (Li Xing 李行, 1958) is a useful starting point for a discussion of Taiwan's alpine frontier films. In the film, two friends, surnamed Liu and Wang, win the lottery and embark on a tour of Taiwan. While in the southwestern town of Pingtung, the brothers are led on a hunting expedition to Sandimen (a town located about twenty kilometers inland from Pingtung) by a thief with designs on their prize money.

They give the thief the slip, but soon find themselves in even deeper trouble, when they fall asleep on a hillside and wake up "[o]n a sound stage" (Hong, 2011: 50) surrounded by savage warriors. The warriors subdue them and deliver them to the barbarian queen and her friends. The queen tries to force Liu to satisfy her carnal desires. The two friends make a narrow escape after Liu pulls Wang away from a harem of indigenous maidens.

The film represents the land beyond the pale as both dangerous and alluring, but only alluring because of the women, not because the brothers want to settle down. There are a few shots of mountain roads, bridges, and even hillside forest paths above Sandimen, but the actual living space of the indigenous people is a total fantasy, having more in common with a B movie about an "African safari" (Hong, 2011: 50) than with the hills of Pingtung or the Rukai indigenous people who live there. The barbarian queen scene was shot in a film studio. Though one of the props, a drinking vessel for two, is Rukai, the matchboard huts are certainly not, as the Rukai at the time still lived in low-slung slate houses. In the film's narrative, the episode may actually be a fantasy because it cuts halfway through to a shot of Brother Liu's girlfriend, who has just woken from a nightmare. After this adventure in the mountains of Pingtung, the brothers experience a much safer indigenous place at Sun Moon Lake, which is actually an indigenous theme park, a place made not for living in but for the viewing pleasure of tourists (Hong, 2011: 51–52). Then they continue their tour.

In this Taiwanese-language film, there is no enduring interest in the alpine region. Brother Liu even says: "This is the mountain region! We can't stay here. I don't want to die here!" But starting in 1950, Taiwan's alpine landscapes began to enter local cultural production, especially state-sponsored cultural production. Taiwanese landscapes were represented as national

landscapes very early, in the 1950s and 1960s, at a time when the overriding national aim was supposedly to counterattack the mainland. From the beginning, the Kuomintang's commitment to the development of Taiwan's landscape is reflected in representations of the transformation of the alpine frontier. Excepting indigenous theme parks, the alpine area was in postwar film a place to civilize, extract natural resources from, and develop into a Chinese rural place. Accordingly, in the following analysis, I discuss three alpine frontiers — pedagogical, logging, farming — in postwar indigenous film. This sub-typology has been adopted to deal with the sheer volume of alpine films. Like the typology of alpine, plains and island, the sub-typology is also ad hoc. Logging and farming are types of land use, and as such make sense in an article about landscape representation. Pedagogy – of indigenous peoples – needs more explaining, because it seems to deflect the focus from the land to the people living there. Suffice it to say that the pedagogical alpine films bear on land use, in that people are taught to accept or question different forms of land use, such as logging and farming. Both of the major plains films would count as farming films according to the sub-typology for the alpine films. The island films are pedagogical. In each section, I begin with the earliest films and trace a process of Sinicization during and Indigenization since 1987.

Taiwan's Pedagogical Alpine Frontier

Alishan Fengyun 阿里山風雲 (*The Legend of Ali Mountain*), the second film to be produced in the postwar period, entirely by a crew from Shanghai, was released in February, 1950 (Hong, 2011: 37). It tells the story of Wu

Feng, an 18th century official who was mythologized in the Japanese era and whose story offered the Chinese nationalists a ready-made myth of a culture bringer. Wu Feng is a successful tradesman who applies to be a *tongshi* 通事, an official responsible for managing relations between indigenous people and the Qing state. He tries to civilize the indigenous people in the film by persuading them to give up their practice of head-hunting. While the film directs some criticism at Chinese settlers trying to displace the indigenous people, most of the criticism is of indigenous cultural practices, especially headhunting. *The Legend of Ali Mountain* has not been preserved intact; all one can watch is several dozen minutes of spliced scenes. The most iconic scene—the source of the most commonly reproduced stills from the film—is ironically of a handsome young brave teaching a beautiful maiden to shoot a bow, with a beautiful 'wilderness' in the background.[5] The scene makes indigenous life seem very appealing, as does the film's theme song "Gaoshanqing," literally 'the high mountains are green.' The song is about maidens who are lovely as a stream and braves who are solid as mountains. According to Hong Guo-Juin, "Gaoshanqing" was "used by the Nationalist government as the sonic representation of Taiwan" (2011: 38), which is true but puzzling, because the song was about indigenous people who seemingly have no need of the kind of civilization the Kuomintang was bringing. At any rate, the next adaptation of the Wu Feng myth for the silver screen stayed more consistently on message, and was as a result much grimmer.

Wu Feng 吳鳳 (Bu Wancang 卜萬蒼, 1962), the best known indigenous

[5] A wilderness is a landscape that has not been landscaped, which is completely natural. The current trend in geography is to interrogate the notion of wilderness on the basis of the idea that all creatures help make the environment, people included. See for instance Kevan Berg's 2013 dissertation on how pre-modern Atayal land use has shaped the physical geography of the northwestern foothills.

film before Wei Desheng's recent epic *Seediq Bale* (2011), was produced by the Taiwan Motion Picture Studio, which was owned by the provincial government, so we can assume that it was intended as a vehicle for official ideology. It was directed by Bu Wancang, successful in the 1930s and 1940s in Shanghai (Hong, 2011: 72), someone without any connection to the indigenous people of Taiwan. The film has just a few of the idyllic notes of *The Legend of Ali Mountain*. In one scene, for example, a young indigenous brave and a maiden sing a duet of love in a moonlit forest; then we cut from the forest to a stunning mountain sunrise. But in most scenes, the alpine landscape is the setting for violence, especially violence directed at indigenous women. In one scene, indigenous braves string up a maiden from a neighboring village to a tree by her hands and torment her verbally, until Wu Feng arrives to save her. In another, another indigenous maiden almost gets raped. Violence is also directed at the Han Chinese settlers, starting with a headhunting attack in the very first scene. The Chinese settlers are not faultless, because they are making incursions upon indigenous land, but mostly the wrong-doers are indigenous. Wu Feng does his best to convince his indigenous friends to change. When they say they need heads to sacrifice to the Great Spirit, Wu Feng gets them to try boar heads instead. But they claim that the Great Spirit wants human heads, and so Wu Feng decides to sacrifice his own head.

In the climactic scene, Wu Feng's sacrifice effects a kind of cultural transformation of the landscape. Wu Feng tells his indigenous friends that a man will ride past a certain place at a certain time. Then he puts on a red robe and rides a white horse, the red of the robe representing blood, and the white his spotless character. The final scene must have been impressive to viewers at the time, because *Wu Feng* was the first color feature in Taiwan. With his

dying breath Wu Feng exhorts his indigenous friends not to sacrifice human heads any longer. Then he dies, right beside a rice field, obviously a Chinese settlement. Horrified that they have killed their friend, the indigenous characters jump off a cliff in a horrific mass suicide. In the next scene, while the indigenous survivors are conducting a ceremony, they look up to see Wu Feng's ghost hovering over the landscape. The survivors are still dressed in indigenous clothing, but they are evidently now peaceful. Wu Feng seems to have replaced the Great Spirit and become their deity. Indeed, in the very final shot indigenous people are shown visiting Wu Feng's temple. That Wu Feng died next to a rice field is probably not a reminder of settler incursions but rather a suggestion that the indigenous people will adopt a Chinese, i.e., agricultural, mode of existence.

Gaoshanqing 高山青 (The Evergreen Mountains) (Li Jia 李嘉, 1970) can be treated as a pedagogical film because of the elementary teacher character. The title *Gaoshanqing* is ironic, referring to what was originally an idealized indigenous place in *The Legend of Ali Mountain*. In *The Legend of Ali Mountain*, the song was about the inseparable relationship between indigenous maidens 'lovely as streams' and braves as 'solid as mountains,' but in Li Jia's 1970 film, new lyrics have been composed by the elementary school teacher about the way of life of Chinese people living in the mountains. The teacher teaches her students to sing a song about their own way of life. Their way of life is Chinese but modern, i.e., technologically advanced. The residents install water wheels and set up a generator. The mountains are electrified in the most memorable shot in the film, in which a hydro-powered light bulb appears massive against the backdrop of the mountains. Their way of life is also ethnically self-contained, in the sense that they only encounter indigenous people once a year, when they go to take in a 'performance' of the

'Spring Festival.' For a few minutes in the middle of the film, the song "Gaoshanqing" is once again indigenous, about the lovely and strong indigenous maidens and braves of Alishan.[6] In this film, the high mountain realm has become a modern Chinese place from which indigenous people are marginalized.

The next pedagogical film, *Laoshi, Sikayeda!* 老師・斯卡也答 (A Lily in the Valley) (Song Cunshou 宋存壽, 1982), a Central Motion Pictures Corporation production, reinserts indigenous people into the alpine realm. But the indigenous people in the film seem extraordinarily passive. The film is about the need for a strong Chinese presence in an alpine indigenous village, Wanda Village 萬大部落, Marosan in the Atayal language, located in Nantou County in central Taiwan. The main characters are all Chinese: a teacher, a doctor, a nun, a police officer, and a shop owner. The shop owner is the bad guy: he lets the indigenous children play video games, sells cheap liquor to their parents, and is even involved in trafficking teenage girls. In the film, the indigenous part of the village is defined by its social problems: alcoholism and family violence. In the face of these social problems, the film affirms the importance of social institutions of education, medicine, religion, and law, all of which are supplied by Chinese people. In particular, the film emphasizes education, promising that school will save the younger generation. The most important place in the film is the school, where the students march in formation in front of a statue of the Founding Father of the Republic of China, Sun Yat-sen, and the most important plot development is the Chinese teacher's decision to continue teaching in the mountains. Although the word *sikayeda*,

[6] The buzz generated by this film, which was nominated for best picture at the Golden Horse Awards, might have brought the song "Gaoshanqing" to the attention of Teresa Teng, one of Mandopop's most famous stars. Teng sang "Gaoshanqing" for the first time in 1971.

meaning goodbye in the Atayal language, seems to be an expression of respect for indigenous language and culture, the landscape is actually not presented as indigenous. Every landscape shot is accompanied by a pair of Chinese-language children's songs written for the film. The first of these songs warns of the evils of rice wine, and the second is a sentimental appeal to the Chinese teacher not to forget about the alpine village. The landscape in the film is Chinese.

Shanzhu, Feishu, Sakenu 山豬、飛鼠、撒可努 (The Sage Hunter) (Tony Cheung 張東亮, 2005) is a whole different world of landscape representation. The many alpine road and forest path scenes in the film are accompanied by Paiwanese melodies and songs, both diegetic (sung on screen) and non-diegetic (background music). (Unfortunately, the melodies and songs go unidentified in the film and the credits.) Though the director was from Hong Kong, the film was a vehicle for and the brainchild of the Paiwan writer Sakinu (or Sakenu in Pinyin), a forest police officer and hunter. In the film Sakinu rides his motorcycle through the hills as a cop, though it is never clear what he is in the hills to monitor. Surely not illegal hunting, because Sakinu is also a hunter who learned from his father and is teaching his own son. He teaches him the tools, techniques and attitudes of a traditional Paiwan hunter. In fact, Sakinu has founded a Hunter's School that the village children attend. Hunting is not the only form of land use in the film. The women in the village plant tea, a cash crop for the Chinese consumer, on the hillsides. One wonders why Sakinu did not choose to shoot fields of millet, which is also grown in the village. At any rate, in general the Paiwan elements in Sakinu's alpine village are emphasized in the film.

When the village receives a notice from the government about a highway slated to run through the 'old village,' Sakinu is selected to go to Taipei to try

to teach a Ministry of the Interior official about Paiwan values. "The mountains are our everything, the realm where the ancestors rest, and we will protect them no matter what," he explains. He invites the official to come visit Taitung, where the new and old villages are located, and takes him on treks into the hills, including one to visit the old village of slate houses, which is still 'haunted' by the ancestors. The official returns enlightened to Taipei, and nothing more is heard about the plan for a new highway. Presumably, the official has also learned something about childrearing, because when Sakinu first meets him in Taipei, in the shadow of the Takashimaya department store tower, the official's daughter has fainted after a night of indulgence in video games. Rather than let his daughter become a denizen of the concrete jungle and the virtual world of the Internet, the official should probably take her on treks into indigenous country.

Xinling zhi ge 心靈之歌 (Song of the Spirits) (Daniel Wu 吳宏翔, 2006), like The Sage Hunter, juxtaposes Chinese urban and indigenous alpine landscapes and uses music to identify alpine landscapes as indigenous. It begins in an office in Taipei, where a radio producer orders a sound engineer into the mountains to record Bunun polyphonic circle singing (pasibutbut). The sound engineer seems to have the perfect life: he lives in an apartment with a view of the iconic skyscraper Taipei 101. He says, actually, yells, that he doesn't want to leave; but he soon warms to the mountain village, especially after he meets an indigenous girl named Zuhui (played by Janine Chang, who is not herself indigenous). Of course, he falls in love with her. But though the film is built around a love plot, it is not exclusively a love story. It is about cultural preservation; 'Zuhui' is an ersatz indigenous name meaning 'wisdom of the ancestors.' The village Zuhui lives in continues to honor the wisdom of the ancestors and practice the ancestral customs,

especially circle singing. The first scene in the village in fact is a circle singing ritual (not a performance for tourists) in front of a slate house, undertaken in traditional Bunun dress. The camera tilts up towards the mountains and treats the audience to a glorious alpine panorama. The film ends the same way. In both scenes, the mountains are filled with Bunun singing; in this way, the film depicts the alpine region as culturally Bunun. *Song of the Spirits* is mainly about the power of education.[7] Zuhui is a music teacher. She wants the younger generation to learn the traditional songs and dances. The school is, as in *A Lily in the Valley*, the most important place in the film, but instead of Sun Yat-sen and uniforms, the school features Bunun decorations and dress. The film suggests that Zuhui will help ensure that the wisdom of the ancestors continues to be honored by the next generation. Zuhui's commitment is why the sound engineer falls in love with her. He also falls in love with the community.

He observes how sound is incorporated into daily life in the mountains. He is drawn into the life of the community, and he gathers sounds of natural and human music, not for a radio program but to create a record. Recording Bunun music in its social and geographical context seems to have been the motivation of the director, Daniel Wu, a documentary filmmaker and oral historian.

Taiwan's Logging Alpine Frontier

In the above pedagogical films, Han Chinese people remain teachers in or

[7] The film is set in an actual Bunun village in Nantou in central Taiwan: Dili Village 地利村, Takmazuan in Bunun, located several dozen kilometers south of Wanda, where A *Lily in the Valley* was set.

observers of indigenous communities. They take in the landscape without having a direct economic interest in it. In the logging films, by contrast, Han Chinese people take an interest in the natural resources in the landscape.

Taiwan was a logging frontier in the late Qing dynasty, when Taiwan became the world's most important supplier of camphor. In the postwar period, in which logging was still a lucrative industry, the logging film became a genre. *Alishan zhi ying* 阿里山之鶯 (Nightingale of Alishan) (Wong Tin-lam, 1957) was the first film in the genre. In this film, the mountain forests become a place for logging and love: one logger falls in love with an indigenous princess. The logger is sadly murdered by the princess's jealous indigenous admirer. His fellow loggers are up in arms. The climactic scene resolves the tension between the Chinese loggers and the local indigenous community; the foreman affirms that the future will be better, and the chief is persuaded. The chief had been concerned about the amount of territory the Chinese have been logging, but his concerns are addressed when the foreman takes him to see a ridge that he has not visited in a decade. The last time the chief was there the ridge was bare, without a single tree. The chief is amazed, because the loggers have doubled as tree-planters: the ridge is now fully forested. The film implies that the result of logging is afforestation. Moreover, the Chinese are the agents of land transformation, while the indigenous people in the film are basically ignorant and unproductive.

The high mountain realm in this film is a fake, generic indigenous place; production took place mainly in a studio. There is no respect for geographical accuracy: the lovers are somehow able to teleport from Alishan to a wide body of water that might be Sun Moon Lake (100 km north by car) but is probably the ocean (100 km east by car), because the film was shot with the participation of the citizens of a seaside village in Changhua County.

Wherever the water is, the lovers sing duets there: the genre of the film might more accurately be described as a logging musical. The film does not bother to identify the indigenous people in the film, either. The point of the film was not ethnographic or geographical accuracy, but to legitimate resource extraction.

The next alpine forestry film, *Hei senlin* 黑森林 (The Black Forest) (Yuan Qiufeng 袁秋楓, 1964) was made by Shaw Brothers, the Hong Kong studio, with the help of a local logging company, the Great Snow Mountain Logging Company, founded by the provincial government in 1958, mostly with American aid money. A state-of-the-art sawmill in Dongshi, a town in Taichung County, was finished in May of 1964, and is featured in one of the opening shots of *The Black Forest*. The release was scheduled to coincide with the completion of the mill; the purpose of the film was to promote the contemporary forestry industry. As a result, in terms of frontier landscape representation, *The Black Forest goes well beyond Nightingale of Alishan*, which was about a kind of frontier logging outpost in the Qing era. There are many other kinds of place in *The Black Forest* besides the logging camp, including the forest, the lumberyard, the restaurants in Dongshi that cater to the loggers, the massive mansion of the logger baron, the smaller mansion of the local indigenous chief (which the logger baron has given him in exchange for the right to log the land), a pristine nature that will supposedly always remain untouched by development, and finally an expansive field for open-air events like the celebration of the logger baron's birthday, at which hundreds of indigenous dancers perform.

These places become settings for a story about the containment of corruption in which the indigenous people are entirely passive. A manager in the lumberyard is corrupt, as is the logger baron's own son. The protagonist in

the film is an honest logger who battles corruption and falls in love at first sight with the daughter of the indigenous chief. The course of true love does not run straight, but love conquers all in the end: the protagonist declares his undying love for the indigenous princess right before she almost runs off a cliff. This is typical of depictions of the indigenous maiden in films at the time: self-destructive when she is not helpless. She knows her way around her father's house and the hills, but has no place in the 'urban' landscape, the landscape of the frontier town in the film. Seemingly, she has not integrated into the modern economy.[8] Nor has her father, her brother, or any other indigenous character in the film. The indigenous characters mainly exist in a dependent sphere that the Chinese have created for them.

Mimi xiangsi lin 密密相思林 (My Secret Memory) (Zhang Peicheng 張佩成, 1977) is Taiwan's last benevolent logger baron film. In it, a Chinese logger baron treats the indigenous people who log the forest as his "brothers." In gratitude, they bring the logger baron, who is nearly sixty years old, the prettiest girl of the mountains. He refuses the girl, but accepts a gift of venison instead. Even though the placid picture of capitalism in the film will seem risible to contemporary viewers, the film is progressive in the sense that the indigenous people have different occupations besides dancing for the viewing pleasure of Chinese audiences, as in *The Black Forest*.

In the film, the mountain forest becomes the setting for a love affair between the logger baron's daughter and one of the indigenous men, a train mechanic apprentice named Naguli. Naguli falls in love at first sight with

[8] I would like to thank the anonymous reviewer for reminding me that "deploying before and after narratives regarding indigenous peoples and modernity is highly problematic." I am at this point speaking of the filmic representation: indigenous people are not integrated into the 'modern economy' in the cinematic world of *The Black Forest*. I am grateful to all three reviewers for their comments.

Yuzhen, the logger baron's daughter, and refuses Kena, an indigenous maiden. Naguli and Yuzhen go on romantic walks through the pristine wilderness, hunting rabbits. At the end of the film Yuzhen returns decades later, in the 1970s, and learns from Kena that Naguli spends his days gathering flowers to sell to tourists who take the train up to Alishan. (So much for his apprenticeship.) By this time, Alishan has become more a tourist destination than a site of resource extraction, in mainstream film and in reality as the logging industry experienced a downturn; the Great Snow Mountain Logging Company had gone bankrupt in 1973. The train that once transported logs from Alishan to the plains now conveys sightseers from to Alishan. The film was a Central Motion Picture Corporation production, and must have been made to promote Alishan tourism, giving viewers an engaging history of logging in the area and showing them what Alishan has to offer today, not just the scenery but also the indigenous culture. Yet while Alishan in the film features cheap indigenous trinkets, the inside of Kena's home seems the same as any Chinese home. The indigenous people seem to have been Sinicized and to occupy the most menial positions in the service economy. Lone Naguli still roams the hills, as his ancestors did, but most indigenous people in the film are creatures of the commercial district around the train station, and even Naguli is dependent on the market.

My Secret Memory is the last film to represent the relationship between Chinese loggers and indigenous people so placidly. In *Dong zhi ji* 冬之祭 (Winter Ritual) (Wang Shuai 王帥, 1991), high mountain logging is critiqued for the first time in Taiwan film, and the conflict between the loggers and the local population on Alishan is presented more realistically than ever before.[9]

[9] It is difficult to find information on the director Wang Shuai. Wang has in recent years relocated to mainland China to direct commercial films. The production company for *Winter*

Winter Ritual begins on the train to Alishan, where *My Secret Memory* ends. A policeman is bringing his son to visit Alishan, where he served as a young man, in Dabang 達邦 (Tapangu in Tsou), just a few kilometers from Alishan. The rest of the film is a flashback. The flashback begins with a walk from a train station located along the Alishan railway, through a misty mountain forest, across a pedestrian suspension bridge, and finally to a police station with a spectacular mountain view. The policeman meets his supervisor and goes to a police judo practice. Thus far, little about the place seems indigenous. But when the trainee policeman visits the local indigenous village and ventures into the forest with one of the young indigenous men, the film establishes the alpine space as indigenous, especially as the Tsou ritual song "Lost Spirit" (*wanghun qu* 亡魂曲; *miyome* in Tsou) is played: 'Moon, please lead the lost souls home.'

Winter Ritual represents Chinese loggers as interlopers in a forest landscape that is spiritually indigenous. A local indigenous leader sells logging rights to a capitalist, supposedly for the good of the entire community, but actually to enrich himself. The young indigenous man who takes the policeman through the forest believes that trees have spirits, and that the loggers are therefore killing spiritual beings. He is of course opposed to the sale of logging rights, and when he sees the loggers attempting to rape a young indigenous woman he burns down the workers' dormitory, killing one of the loggers. The film's main concern is law and order: the Chinese police officer tracks the arsonist down and convinces him to be a man and take responsibility for his crime. But the film is also clearly critical of the way

Ritual only made a single film. Through his father, Wang obtained funding from Uni-President Corporation. The film was not recognized at the Golden Horse awards, and plans for a trip to the Cannes film festival fell through. It apparently did not do well in theaters.

resource extraction is carried out, and supportive of some form of indigenous self-governance: at the end of the film, when the Chinese police officer returns years later with his son, he meets his replacement, an indigenous police officer.

The recent indigenous resistance epic *Saideke Balai* 賽德克巴萊 (Warriors of the Rainbow: Seediq Bale) (Wei Desheng 魏德聖, 2011), which dramatizes the Wushe Incident, is among other things an anti-logging film. The first scene after the Tgdaya Seediq village chieftains submit to the Japanese is of Seediq loggers carrying logs down the mountain in the rain. One logger slips, drops his log into a creek far below, and almost follows the log. They carry the logs down to make a bit of money to buy alcohol with. While the loggers are drinking, one says: "Look how the trees of the ancestors have been turned into lumber." In another scene, another logger complains that the trees of the hunting ground have almost all been cut down. As if the injustice was not already obvious enough, there is a third scene in which a Japanese police officer berates a logger for damaging a log he has risked his life to carry down the mountain. However, in the larger context of the film, these early scenes have an unexpected subtlety and power. The Seediq people believe they are descended from a brother and a sister who emerged from a tree, the *pusu qhuni*. Cutting down the trees of the hunting ground is akin to cutting into their own flesh. The belief in a pair of tree-born progenitors informs the mass Seediq suicide during the Japanese reprisal. Women and children commit suicide by hanging themselves from tree branches to reunite with the ancestors. *Seediq Bale* represents the colonizers as interlopers in the mountains. The post offices, police stations, stores, and schools, of which the colonial Japanese administrators in the film are so proud are represented as

impositions.[10] The true residents of the villages, the forests, the mountaintops, and the sky above are the Seediq indigenous people.

Taiwan's Farming Alpine Frontiers

In the logging films, the mountains are exploited, but the indigenous people remain. In the alpine farming films of the 1950s and 1960s, the mountains are denuded of trees and depopulated of aborigines to make space for Chinese farmers and agricultural communities. These films embodied a dream of alpine ruralism.

The first such film was *Hehuan shan shang* 合歡山上 (On Mount Hehuan) (Pan Lei 潘壘, 1958). It was made by a production company founded by the Ministry of National Defense and the Kuomintang. *On Mount Hehuan* begins with a short documentary in which Chiang Kai-shek and Madame Soong walk over a suspension footbridge to observe the progress Chiang Ching-kuo, Chang Kai-shek's son, was making on the Central Cross Island Highway. The documentary also includes footage of Chiang Ching-kuo leading the roadwork as well as workers striding through the snow. The narrator tells viewers that the highway will allow access to forest, mining, and tourism resources. The viewer is asked to recognize the achievements of every road-building hero, and to feel proud of a great national achievement. Why choose Mount Hehuan, which was not on the main route of the Central Cross Island Highway, as the setting for a feature film? Because it is the highest

[10] *Seediq Bale* has several scenes in a school. The indigenous police officer Hanaoka Ichiro (Tgdaya Seediq name: Dakis Nomin) is one of the teachers, and there is also a physically abusive Japanese teacher. The film could also be discussed as a pedagogical film. Indeed, Mona Rudao, the leader of the resistance, tells Hanaoka Ichiro that in twenty years, because of education, the Seediq people will cease to exist.

highway anywhere in Taiwan.

In the film proper, there are four kinds of place: Chinese work camp, indigenous village, pristine wilderness, and agricultural field. The hero is a Chinese explosives engineer working on the highway. As such, he represents the creative destruction of technological modernity. He lives in the work camp. The indigenous village is divided, with the church and the school on the side of good and the saloon on the side of sin. The heroine is good. She is an elementary school teacher, is indigenous, but looks Chinese and dresses in a cheongsam. As the principal of the school explains, she was sent to be educated in the plains, and has now returned. She has returned to convert the children to Chinese modernity. While the indigenous women in the film are depicted as progressive, the indigenous men in the village are painted as reactionary, and dress in traditional clothes in the saloon. The only time the women appear in indigenous dress is during a nighttime fireside song and dance scene, included because audiences expected exoticism. But the exoticism is carefully contained, and for the most part the film promotes assimilation. As the heroine asks the hero: "You couldn't tell I was indigenous, right, because I dress Chinese?" The indigenous men end up conforming to Chinese custom, too. One troublemaker ends up wearing a uniform and joining the work crew by the end of the film. Thus, in the film, the village is in the process of becoming a Chinese place, in the sense that the people who live there are embracing a Chinese way of life, at least a way of life the Kuomintang wished to promote in 1958.

The explosives engineer and his girlfriend start exploring a third kind of place in the film, the pristine natural environment of hills, streams, and groves. The presence of this kind of space, as in other alpine films, implies that development will have no fundamental impact on nature. But the lovers

also visit a high mountain field where the local people are growing millet, an indigenous crop. This is a rare moment in Martial Arts era indigenous films in which indigenous land use is represented. The millet field gives the engineer the idea to stay and settle down. After an accidental explosion in which he almost dies, he wakes up to see the teacher by his side, and decides to stay forever. In the conclusion of the film, the bosom of nature has been flattened into a rural place: a rounded hill has become a level field. In the policy language of the day, the mountains were to be 'plain-ified' (*shandi pingdi hua* 山地平地化), brought up to the level of the plains. The protagonist and his indigenous wife are living in a shack on a high mountain field: except for the altitude, and the helicopter flying overhead, this was an ancient Chinese cultural ideal. They appear to be growing cabbages; they are certainly not growing millet. Strangely, the field at the end of the film is still quite barren.

High mountain fields would not start to bear fruit in film for nearly a decade. *Lishan chunxiao* 梨山春曉 (Sunrise over Mount Li) (Yang Wenkan 楊文淦, 1967) showcased the achievements of national agricultural science at two thousand meters above sea level, and was rewarded: *Sunrise over Mount Li* was named Best Social Education Picture at the sixth Golden Horse Awards. Located just a few dozen kilometers along the highway from Mount Hehuan, Mount Li (or Lishan) has been famous for produce since the 1960s. The film is about why it became famous. The protagonist is a returned overseas student, an agricultural engineer, who is considering going overseas again to make his fortune. He reconsiders his loyalties because of a girl. The girl is not, however, an indigenous maiden, as she had been in every previous alpine romance film. Now she is Chinese. By 1967, Taiwan's alpine frontier had become a native Chinese place. The only time indigenous people appear in *Sunrise over Lishan* is to perform a circle dance for Chinese tourists for

several minutes in the middle of the film. The aborigines have become pure entertainment, not in any way the focus of the film. Though there are numerous panoramas and overhead shots in *Sunrise over Lishan*, there is no indication of where the indigenous people live. To be sure, this was not the first circle dance in Taiwanese film, but it was the first time indigenous people were so marginalized from a place that had once seemed theirs in the popular imagination.

There have been no alpine farming films since *Sunrise over Mount Li*, and thus been no corresponding indigenization of the genre, which was abandoned as the idea of large numbers of people living at high altitudes has lost popular appeal. In the 1970s, an era of industrial 'deepening,' in which freeways, refineries, and even nuclear power plants were built on the plains, high mountain farms could hardly be expected to impress people. In this decade, relatively few alpine films were made, except for *My Secret Memory*. In the 1980s, by contrast, two epic historical films featuring indigenous peoples appeared, but both were set on the plains.

Taiwan's Plains Frontier in Postwar Indigenous Film

Films about the alpine frontier have to be considered in terms of the Kuomintang's ideology of development. Films about settling the plains should be seen in relation to the rise of nativism (*xiangtu zhuyi* 鄉土主義). In the 1970s, at a time when agriculture was being industrialized by returned American-educated technocrats such as former president Lee Tung-hui, nativist writers like Li Qiao wrote narratives about settlement, describing a distinctive Taiwanese experience. In the best known nativist epic, Li Qiao's

Wintry Night trilogy (1977–1979), Hakka pioneers settle the frontier, make friends with the local indigenous people, and fight the Japanese. Their children's generation takes part in protests in the 1920s and 1930s against Japanese rule, but their grandchildren's generation ends up serving on the Japanese side in World War Two. Li Qiao conspicuously ends the third book in his trilogy in 1945, before the Kuomintang arrive in Taiwan, as if to imply *Wintry Night* was about Taiwanese experience not understood by mainlanders. Two major settlement films, both directed by men of mainland background, are Chinese responses to this assertion of a distinctive Taiwanese experience. The directors may not have read *Wintry Night*, but were responding to the implicit expression of Taiwanese identity in the late 1970s, which became explicit in the early 1980s. As mainlanders, they had access to capital that nativists like Li Qiao did not. *Wintry Night* was as a result not filmed until several decades later, in the early 2000s, when it was made into a miniseries for the local public television station. (As a miniseries and not a feature film, it is not part of the purview of this article.)

The first of Taiwan's two epic settlement films is *Yuan* 源 (The Pioneers) (Chen Yaoqi 陳耀圻, 1980). It begins in the rough frontier port town of Miaoli. A boy named Wu Linfang, a recent immigrant from southern China, loses his parents to illness. Orphaned, he spends several years as an indentured servant, but he dreams of settling inland and living as a free man. Eventually Wu Linfang pursues his dream. He elopes with the daughter of his master, setting out to make a better life. Wu Linfang follows in the footsteps of other pioneers into indigenous territory, and eventually founds his own community, the village of Shiweiqiang 石圍牆, in what is now Gongguan Township, Miaoli County. The community is tightly knit, and almost exclusively Chinese. The local chief agrees to let them farm the land in

exchange for rent, then disappears into the forest. An earlier pioneer, Wu Duan, appears to have 'gone native,' as he has taken an indigenous wife and adopted an indigenous style of dress. Wu Linfang, by contrast, has as little to do with the indigenous people as possible. The only indigenous person he has to deal with on a regular basis is Wu Duan's indigenous wife, who becomes Wu Linfang's responsibility after Wu Duan is killed. Except for Wu Duan's widow, indigenous characters have no name, no identity. Their living space is never represented; they belong to the wilderness off camera, except when they go on the warpath. Midway through the film, they disappear from the narrative altogether, in a plot development involving an American engineer and his disreputable lady friend from New Orleans, who have been hired to develop local oil sources. The indigenous people reappear only momentarily at the end of the film, in a scene in which Wu Linfang's son vows to develop the resource for local use to an audience that includes two braves.

It is not clear why the director Chen Yaoqi wanted to tell the story of Taiwan's settlement as a dream of finding a local source of oil. The title of the film literally means not 'pioneer' but 'source.' The obvious association is with oil, but perhaps the title refers not to oil but to culture. Perhaps the director wanted to remind viewers of their own source, mainland China. Or perhaps he was suggesting that Wu Linfang's descendants will find new sources of life in Taiwan. At any rate, the indigenous people play a peripheral role in the story, which is about the Sinicization of the mountains above Miaoli.

The second of Taiwan's epic settler movies, *Tangshan Guo Taiwan* 唐山過臺灣 (The Heroic Pioneers) (Li Xing 李行, 1986), was about the fellow who led the settlement of Ilan in northeastern Taiwan, in the early 19th century: Wu Sha 吳沙. Unlike Wu Linfang, Wu Sha was a squatter. Wu Sha led a large group of settlers from Danshui to Ilan and opened up the land without

reaching a rental agreement with the local chief. The Lanyang squatters were potential taxpayers and had political clout, and they eventually got settlement charters for the land they had already occupied. The squatter-settlers pushed the Kavalan indigenous people south (Hsu, 1980). In the film, however, the conflict between settlers and indigenous people is resolved in friendship.

The film begins in Danshui, on Taiwan's northeast coast. Danshui is filled with dens of iniquity that have corrupted one of Wu Sha's sons. Wu Sha is eager to escape. He soon does so, in a five-minute-long trek montage from Danshui to Ilan, which emphasizes the hardship of the journey more than a similar, but much shorter, sequence in *The Pioneers*. But the most striking scenes in *The Heroic Pioneers* are set before the trek begins. Wu Sha surveys the land and shows it, in two separate scenes, to an old partner and to the son he likes the best. The land is empty of people; the film practices a kind of representational ethnic cleansing. In both scenes Wu Sha makes the same arguments and uses the same vocabulary. He senses the primal energy, the '*qi,*' of the land and, in a manner reminiscent of a local gazetteer studied by Emma Teng (2004: 98), laments that this *qi* has not been cultivated. There is no attempt to rationalize indigenous dislocation in *The Heroic Pioneers*, because in the film the Kavalan aborigines are simply not using the land. Their village is up in the hills somewhere. The only part of the village that is represented is the chief's house.

At the end of the film, Wu Sha offers the Kavalan chief twenty percent of the harvest as rent. The chief wants fifty percent, but agrees to twenty when Wu Sha offers to teach him the techniques of farming, just because the Chinese and the Kavalan indigenous people are such good friends. But though Wu Sha and the Kavalan chief attend ceremonies to found new settlements together, Chinese and Kavalan are not represented as farming together or

living in proximity to each other. There is a faint critical note, sounded by the Kavalan princess who says, "That old fox Wu Sha plies you with alcohol, when all he wants is the land of our ancestors." But in the end, the director Li Xing leaves the audience not with a critique but with a bromide about Chinese-indigenous friendship.

The Heroic Pioneers was the last film of the great but socially conservative director Li Xing. Li Xing was born in Shanghai in 1930 and did not come to Taiwan until he was twenty years old. By the time he was thirty, he was directing farces like *Brother Wang and Brother Liu Tour Taiwan*. In contrast with the high mountain films of the 1950s and 1960s, which promoted alpine development, Li Xing's last film did not aim to promote settlement, as the settlement of Ilan was a *fait accompli* by 1986. Instead, coming several years after a distinct Taiwanese identity had begun to be openly expressed in the public sphere, Li Xing sought to remind Taiwanese people where they came from, China, and who they were descended from, 'pioneers' like Wu Sha, who crossed the dangerous Taiwan Strait in the hold of a tempest-tossed boat. In Chinese, the title of the film, literally "crossing from the hills of Tang [China] to Taiwan," is proverbial:

From the hills of Tang to Taiwan,	唐山過台灣，
A knot of nostalgia sets viscerally on.	心中結歸丸。

In the proverb, settlement was hardship, and settlers felt nostalgia for the familiar places of the mainland. The film recalls the nostalgia for China of the proverb, but represents settlement as a heroic achievement, in which a little China is created in the wilds of northeastern Taiwan.

1986 was not the last time the Wu Sha story was told. *Shaonian Gemalan* 少年噶瑪蘭 (Kavalan Youth) (Kang Jinhe 康進和, 1999), is a feature film-

length cartoon aimed at a middle school audience, especially students from Ilan. Like *The Heroic Pioneers*, it seeks to remind these students who they are and where they come from. But here the connection to China is attenuated. A high school student is whisked back in time two hundred years, to a time when Wu Sha was settling the Lanyang Plain. He soon realizes that while the Chinese settlers, led by Wu Sha, are kindly, there are also Chinese traders, who are cruel; surprisingly, for a story for young adults, the indigenous heroine in the story is abducted by Chinese human traffickers. But most importantly the protagonist discovers he is part Kavalan, descended from the indigenous people who have lived on the Lanyang Plain 'since time immemorial.' The protagonist's realization exemplifies a current in Taiwanese settler nationalism where Taiwanese people identify as indigenous in order to build Taiwanese national identity (Anderson, 2001). This trend has not become mainstream; few Taiwanese people identify as indigenous. *Kavalan Youth* encourages people to identify with their indigenous ancestors, and otherwise invites viewers to see the geographical features of the Lanyang Plain, especially the mystical Guishan Island that is just off the coast but always in view, as culturally Kavalan.

Taiwan's Island Frontier in Postwar Indigenous Film

In the postwar alpine and plains indigenous films discussed above, the assimilation and displacement of indigenous people from the landscape under Martial Law can be understood as a process of Sinicization. Never depicted in film as a place where Chinese people might want to settle down in large numbers, Taiwan's filmic island frontier, Orchid Island, has always been Tao,

inhabited by the Tao people, during and since Martial Law. Indeed, the Tao, their colorful dress, and their distinctive dances are part of why people go to see Orchid Island films. But while the Tao were never displaced, they underwent a process of representational Sinicization in the first Orchid Island film. They accepted modernity from a Chinese culture bringer, giving up customs that were perceived as backward or dangerous and retaining only benign aspects of local culture.

The first Orchid Island film was *Lanyu zhi ge* 蘭嶼之歌 (Song of Orchid Island) (Pan Lei 潘壘, 1965). Like The Black Forest, it was made by Shaw Brothers to promote local industry, in this case tourism. *Song of Orchid Island* shows the island being prepared for tourism. A Chinese civilizing mission leaves Orchid Island in a benignly idyllic state, ready for tourists. A Chinese doctor comes in search of his father, who went missing on the island while doing scientific research. He falls in love with a Tao indigenous maiden, who was played by a Chinese actress and was a native speaker of Mandarin, and triumphs over the local shaman, killing him in the climactic combat scene. At the end of the film the doctor decides to stay on Orchid Island to settle down with the maiden. In doing so, he brings modern medicine to the island. In the final scene, Christianity, brought by an American pastor, also triumphs over shamanism and belief in *anito,* the local word for 'spirit,' when the shamanic installation goes up in flames on the beach and the sun shines bright on the church on the hilltop. The film is the first film brochure for Orchid Island tourism. In the film, a tour comes to the island, led by the doctor's rich Chinese ex-girlfriend and her friends. The Chinese girls prance about in bikinis and go snorkeling to see the coral reefs. The underwater photography is stunning. The snorkeling scene also gives the only indication in the film of indigenous livelihoods: indigenous men catch seafood, which Chinese traders

will resell for a huge profit. The exploitation of the indigenous people is a source of amusement for the Chinese traders in the film, and for the audience as well. In the film, Orchid Island exists for the visual and culinary pleasure of Chinese people.

Orchid Island has remained idyllic since the lifting of Martial Law, but in post-1987 films there is no longer any emphasis on 'foreign' cultural influences such as modern medicine and Christianity (even though Christianity has become part of indigenous lives all around the island), and no longer is a Chinese visitor presented as a culture bringer. Now Chinese (or Taiwanese) visitors come to experience and learn. In *Dengdai feiyu* 等待飛魚 (Fishing Luck) (Zeng Wenzhen 曾文珍, 2006), for instance, a young Tao man teaches a harried girl, who has come to Orchid Island from Taipei on a work assignment, how to enjoy life. As Anita Chang (2009) shows in her article on the film, romantic primitivist fantasies are projected upon the island and the surrounding sea. The island is a place where Taiwanese tourists might achieve mystical oneness with nature. In the film, the island also becomes the setting for the mystical oneness of love. In one of the most impressive scenes, the hero, played by the singer Biung – who is Bunun, not Tao – sings the film's theme song to the girl from Taipei on a glorious seaside hill.

For the most part *Fishing Luck*, like *Song of Orchid Island*, is a tourist brochure. The boyfriend drives tourists around in a car he has christened Flying Fish No. 1. Featured settings in the film include a funky bar (where the girl from Taipei has a mystical experience) and a bed and breakfast. Finally, the food: after the girl returns to Taipei, she goes out for seafood at a restaurant and is shocked at how stale the fish tastes. The fish she enjoyed on Orchid Island, caught fresh from the sea by her Tao boyfriend and served with yams and yam greens from his mother's garden, was so much better. She has

had enough: she abandons her life in Taipei and relocates to Orchid Island to be with her unemployed indigenous boyfriend. It is a most improbable love story.

The other recent Orchid Island film is more substantial. *Pongso no Tao* 人之島 (Island of the People) (Wang Jingui 王金貴, 2008) treats the landscape as a setting for a romance, between a Taiwanese teacher and her half-Tao half-Chinese boyfriend (whose father was a retired soldier from mainland China), but the romance is much more muted, so that the landscape itself, as well as the way of life of the people who have traditionally lived upon it, becomes the focus. The relationship between the people and the landscape is the topic of the theme song, which is both diegetic, played and sung by several villagers, and non-diegetic, as it becomes background music for a montage of Tao village scenes and landscapes. The song is sung from an old man's perspective. The old man in the song is sad because so many young Tao people have left the island for work on the Taiwanese mainland.

The song is also about a Taiwanese teacher's experience of Orchid Island. In certain scenes, Orchid Island seems an exotic place: in the first scene, a Tao elder stands at the seaside holding a sacrificial chicken. Vanessa Frangville (2011: 12) criticizes the film for not explaining the ceremony. There is also a hair dance (where women toss their hair), which is not explained either. But the film adopts the perspective of the teacher, who has not been on Orchid Island for very long. She cannot be expected to understand everything. She does her best to fit in: she rents a room in a traditional Tao house. She is there to experience, not to transform, the daily life of Orchid Island. She has herself been transformed by her experience, becoming as she says, "quiet inside." Her claim may be groan-inducing, but seems like something someone in her position might say. The fact that she is an art

teacher makes her seem a bit more interesting. I do not think she is represented as a pedagogue along the lines of Wu Feng. She has learned more from Orchid Island than the Tao children have learned from her. She is there to facilitate their visual acquaintance with Orchid Island, because she takes her students on numerous field trips to paint the landscape of Orchid Island. The boyfriend is a sound engineer, recalling the plot of *Song of the Spirits*. The two main characters, in this way, encourage the characters in the film, and the audience, to be more observant of the indigenous sights and sounds of Orchid Island. The film does not address sociopolitical issues, such as the effect of tourism on the island, the future of the nuclear waste dump, indigenous livelihoods or any of the other issues a critic might want to see in a feature film about Orchid Island, but it does offer a charming, slow-paced take on daily life on the island.

Conclusion: Reimagining Taiwan's Geography

In this article, I have traced the transformation of three kinds of frontiers in postwar Taiwan indigenous film. I described this transformation as Sinicization before and Indigenization since 1987, when the indigenous rights movement began demanding policy changes that have led to greater recognition and respect for indigenous peoples. In pre-1987 films, the landscape is Sinicized. The indigenous people are sometimes assimilated, sometimes marginalized. Rarely do they seem to do anything to shape the places they are inhabiting. Rarely do we find out how they support themselves in these places. Since 1987, Taiwan's frontier landscapes have been Indigenized in indigenous films. In these films, the frontier environment is

indigenous, produced and inhabited by indigenous people. Non-indigenous characters visit the frontier not to transform it but to experience it. Experience does not leave them with a sophisticated understanding of indigenous culture. Explanations of culture (of for instance attire and song) are superficial, if they are even offered. But to some extent, visitors to indigenous places in post-1987 indigenous films are transformed by the experience and end up as a result questioning aspects of their own way of life, especially how they inhabit places.

As a treatment of films made by Chinese or Taiwanese directors, this article has dealt exclusively with Chinese perspectives on the imagined geography of Taiwan's frontiers. What about indigenous perspectives? I think we might approach indigenous perspectives on imagined geography by discussing the return to the village (*huigui buluo* 回歸部落) films. The half-Tao half-Chinese boyfriend in *Pongso no Tao* has returned to the village. His mode of dress shows he has adopted a Taiwanese mode of life, or is at least quite well-adjusted to modern urban life. But he speaks Tao with his mother and other elders, and like older Tao men he enjoys going spearfishing at night in the ocean. He still seems to feel at home on Orchid Island, and has decided to return to Orchid Island to live.

The earliest return to the village film was *Xibu lai de ren* 西部來的人 (The Man From the West) (Huang Mingchuan 黃明川, 1990), made at a time when indigenous writers like Auvini Kadresengane and Syaman Rapongan were trying to go back to the village. For writers like Kadresengane and Rapongan, and for the man from the west, going back to the physical village turned out to be the easy part. The hard part was making a life in the village. It was hard because time away from a place changes a person, and time changes a place, too. Time away can make a place unfamiliar, so that what was once

home becomes a new frontier of experience and practice. Chiu Kuei-fen has written about Syaman Rapongan's attempt to go back to his village on Orchid Island, specifically how he 'produces' the impression of indigeneity in the text; but to my knowledge, no comprehensive study of return to the village films exists in any language. Taiwan's very first 'native feature,' Laha Mebow's *Bu yiyang de yueguang: Xunzhao Shayun* 不一樣的月光：尋找莎韻 (Finding Sayun) (2011), is arguably a back to the village film (see Sterk, 2014).

'Transforming frontiers' might be a helpful framework for a study of the back to the village films. In this article, I have argued that the frontier was transformed before 1987 and became transformative after 1987. I hope it can continue to be transformative, beginning with people's ideas about what a normal way of 'dwelling' in a place is.[11] The frontier films I have studied in this article, and, I think, the return to the village films, invite reflection on how people create and relate to places, at a time when postmodern urban life (of reinforced concrete and smartphone screens) may alienate people from the physical and social landscapes in which they live, at a time when people's capacity to transform the landscape is greater than ever before, but also at a time when people are still reminded of their vulnerability in the event of environmental catastrophes such as the September 21, 1999 earthquake or the August 8, 2009 flood. At such a time, the frontier remains an important physical and metaphorical place to explore identities and possibilities, even when the traditional geographical frontier, a place so unfamiliar that it is at the edge or even off the map, has long since closed.

[11] See Simon, 2013 for a discussion of "dwelling perspectives" in a Taiwanese context.

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Appendix:
Filmography of Postwar Taiwan Indigenous Films

Year	Name	Director	Production	Geography (Theme)	Setting	People
1949	The Legend of Ali Mountain 阿里山風雲	Chang Ying 張英; Chang Cheh 張徹	Wan-Xiang 萬象 Film Company (private; Shanghai)	Alpine (Pedagogical)	Alishan, presumably	Tsou?
1957	Nightingale of Alishan 阿里山之鶯	Wong Tin-lam 王天林	Xin-Hua 新華 Film Company (private)	Alpine (Logging)	Alishan, presumably	Tsou?
1958	On Mount Hehuan 合歡山上	Pan Lei 潘壘	中國電影製片廠(中製) (public: Ministry of National Defense and Kuomintang)	Alpine (Farming)	Mount Hehuan	Atayal?
1958	Brother Wang and Brother Liu Tour Taiwan 王哥柳哥遊臺灣	Lee Hsing 李行	Tai-Lian 台聯電影企業社 (private)	Alpine and Plain	Sandimen, Pingtung; Sun Moon Lake, Nantou	Rukai; Atayal
1962	Wu Feng: The Christ of the East 吳鳳	Bu Wancang 卜萬蒼	Taiwan Motion Pictures Studios 臺灣電影攝製場 (台製) (public: provincial government)	Alpine (Pedagogical)	Alishan; Chiayi	Paiwan [sic]
1964	The Black Forest 黑森林	Yuan Chiufeng 袁秋楓	Shaw Brothers (private; Hong Kong)	Alpine (Logging)	Dongshi Town, Taichung	Atayal?
1965	Song of Orchid Island 蘭嶼之歌	Pan Lei 潘壘	Shaw Brothers (private; Hong Kong)	Island	Orchid Island	Tao (called Yami)
1967	Sunrise Over Mount Li 梨山春曉	Yang Wenkan 楊文淦	Taiwan Film Culture Co. 台影公司 (public: provincial government)	Alpine (Farming)	Lishan, Nantou	Atayal?
1970	The Evergreen Mountains 高山青	Li Jia 李嘉	Wan-Sheng 萬聲影業公司 (private)	Alpine	Unspecified	Atayal?
1977	My Secret Place 密密相思林	Zhang Peicheng 張佩成	Central Motion Picture Corp. CMPC 中央 (public: Kuomintang)	Alpine (Logging)	Alishan	Tsou?
1980	The Pioneers 源	Chen Yaoqi 陳耀圻	CMPC 中央(public: Kuomintang)	Plain	Miaoli	Atayal?

1982	A Lily in the Valley 老師,斯卡也答	Song Cunshou 宋存壽	CMPC 中央(public: Kuomintang)	Alpine (Pedagogical)	Wanda Village, Nantou	Atayal?
1986	The Heroic Pioneers 唐山過臺灣	Li Xing 李行	Taiwan Motion Pictures Studios TMPS 台製 (public: provincial government)	Plain	Danshui; Ilan	Kavalan
1991	Rite of Winter 冬之祭	Wang Shuai 王帥	Fade-In Video Production Comp. 飛令映影視傳播有限公司 (private) *	Alpine (Logging)	Dabang Village, Chiayi	Tsou
1999	Kavalan Youth 少年噶瑪蘭	Kang Jinhe 康進和	Public Television Service PTS 公視 (public: public television station)	Plain	Ilan	Kavalan
2005	The Sage Hunter 山豬、飛鼠、撒可努	Tony Cheung 張東亮	Light House Productions Ltd. (private; Hong Kong) *	Alpine (Pedagogical)	Xinxianglang, Taitung County	Paiwan
2006	Fishing Luck 等待飛魚	Zeng Wenzhen 曾文珍	Ocean Deep Films 威像 & Lumiere 盧米埃 Motion Picture Corporation (private) #	Island	Orchid Island; Taipei	Tao
2006	Song of the Spirits 心靈之歌	Daniel Wu 吳宏翔	Windmill Motion Picture Company 風車 (private) * #	Alpine (Pedagogical)	Dili Village, Nantou	Bunun
2008	Pongso no Tao 人之島	Wang Jingui 王金貴	Chang Tso Chi 張作驥 Film Studio & Irrawaddy 伊洛瓦底 Film Company (private) * #	Island	Orchid Island	Tao
2011	Seediq Bale 賽德克巴萊	Wei Desheng 魏德聖	ARS Film 果子 (private) #	Alpine (Logging; Pedagogical)	Wushe, Nantou; etc.	Seediq

Key

* The film was the studio's only production. In some cases production companies were founded to make a film, but the film performed poorly at the box office.

Received a government grant. Since 1987, government grants have been awarded to support the local film industry but also to promote multiculturalism and cultural preservation.

化界：台灣戰後原住民主題電影中內部邊界的想像地理

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摘 要

本文針對台灣戰後二十幾部原住民主題電影，分析山地、平地、島嶼三種邊界的「想像地理」，進而提出以下觀察與論點：多部戒嚴時期的山地邊界電影為國家製片廠所製，圖以將原住民所屬的高山邊界改變為中國的國家空間；兩部平地邊界電影到了1980年代才出現，是兩位大陸導演對台灣國族主義的崛起的反應；台灣的島嶼邊界電影（即蘭嶼電影）傾向於使用異國情調來推動觀光。不過，三種邊界在原住民主題電影中都經過「華化」與「原化」的過程，而變化的動力在解嚴前後從中央轉移到邊界：解嚴前，華人「化」邊界風景與原住民族；解嚴後，原住民所居住的邊界風景「化」華人（或台灣人），使其開始反省自己的生活方式。

關鍵詞：邊界、想像地理、原住民電影、風景再現、台灣