

The LANDSCAPE of HISTORICAL MEMORY



THE POLITICS OF MUSEUMS AND
MEMORIAL CULTURE IN
POST-MARTIAL LAW TAIWAN

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Abbreviations and Romanization

CCA	Council for Cultural Affairs (文化建設委員會)
CCP	Chinese Communist Party (中國共產黨)
DPP	Democratic Progressive Party (民主進步黨)
KMT	Kuomintang (國民黨), aka Guomindang or Nationalists
MOC	Ministry of Culture (文化部)
NMH	National Museum of History (國立歷史博物館)
NTM	National Taiwan Museum (國立臺灣博物館)
NMTH	National Museum of Taiwan History (國立臺灣歷史博物館)
NMTL	National Museum of Taiwan Literature (國立臺灣文學館)
NPM	National Palace Museum (國立故宮博物院)
PRC	People's Republic of China (中國人民共和國)
ROC	Republic of China (中華民國)
SBNPM	Southern Branch of the National Palace Museum (國立故宮博物院南院)

This book generally adopts the pinyin system of romanization, except in the many cases (e.g., Ma Ying-jeou, Tsai Ing-wen, Tu Cheng-sheng, Chiang Ching-kuo, Kaohsiung, Kinmen) in which the name is commonly referred to in Western languages with Wade-Giles or other forms of romanization. The word "Nationalist" capitalized refers to the Nationalist Party, or KMT. "Taiwan nationalism" (or cognates thereof) using the lower case refers to the green camp's promotion of Taiwan nativism, identity, and subjectivity.

Introduction

Since the late 1970s, Taiwan has metamorphosed from a single-party state ruled by the authority of martial law (1949–1987) under the Nationalist Party (國民黨, Guomindang or Kuomintang, hereafter KMT) to a fully functioning, multiparty democratic nation with guaranteed rights of freedom of speech. Unlike the People's Republic of China (PRC) across the Strait, Taiwan has a true civil society in which ideas are exchanged freely and without fear of political repercussions. Since the democratization process first began in the late 1970s and early 1980s and especially since the formal end of martial law in 1987, historical memories once politically taboo under the Nationalists have been unearthed, and as that process continues, Taiwan has been shaping for itself radically new identities that are pluralist and multicultural, in stark contrast to the Sinocentric identity that dominated under martial law.

Not surprisingly, this process has become embroiled in the political struggles of Taiwan's emergent democracy. The debate over issues of Taiwan identity—in which historical memory has played a critical role—often seems to replicate or reflect the political clashes between Taiwan's two major parties: the KMT and the Democratic Progressive Party (民進黨, hereafter DPP). These two parties and their supporters and sympathizers are often referred to, in the polarizing chromatic language that is typical of democratic politics around the world, as the “blue camp” (藍營) and “green camp” (綠營), or “pan-blue” (泛藍) and “pan-green” (泛綠), respectively. Their political and cultural platforms are strikingly at odds, but it should be said that many people in Taiwan reject this kind of binary, either/or mentality and are able to balance quite easily multiple identities, such as “Chinese” and “Taiwanese,” which for many are not as irreconcilable as they might appear to be through the lens of political discourse. One remarkable thing about the people of Taiwan is the way many of them “code switch” seamlessly between different languages, most obviously Taiwanese (referred to variously as Taiyu, Minnanyu, Hoklo, or Hokkienese) and Mandarin, but other languages as well. Although, like everything else in Taiwan, language has been politicized (Wei 2006; Chang and Holt 2014)—Mandarin is associated with Mainlanders and the KMT's monolingual cultural policy, Taiwanese with Taiwan nativism/nationalism and the DPP—the notion of multiple identities within an individual is a very visible and audible part of daily life in Taiwan.

The issue of Taiwan identity—often also referred to as “subjectivity” (主體性) in the intellectual discourse—is not just a reflection of political liberalization and the emergence of alternative views of the past; it also has much to do with global politics and Taiwan’s changing international position. It is not coincidental that the interest in nativist Taiwan culture first emerged in the wake of the 1971 decision by the United Nations to grant the PRC a seat as the official “China.” As countries around the world recognized the PRC, Taiwan’s status as a nation, one that had been at the heart of Cold War struggles, crumbled. This provoked much soul-searching about Taiwan’s place in the world and, eventually, what it meant to be Taiwanese in a world that did not recognize Taiwan as a sovereign nation. This early concern about Taiwan identity in literature and in intellectual discussions was heightened with the political liberalization of the 1980s and 1990s, when academics, journalists, artists, filmmakers, and writers explored and asserted new forms of national identification.

Museums and museum exhibitions have also been important agents in promoting and reflecting these politicized interpretations of Taiwan identity and historical memory. Much of the debate over identity and subjectivity initially took place in the intellectual realm; museums then brought those debates into the public arena. Museums are, by their very nature, public institutions that anyone with the inclination and/or financial means can enter and enjoy; they put the past on display through exhibits that tell stories for general consumption. Because the museums I discuss are, for the most part, state-funded, their founding, development, budgets, and personnel are inherently intertwined with politics. In this book, I explore the place of museums and exhibitionary culture more generally in the political landscape of Taiwan’s young democracy. How have the end of martial law, the emergence of Taiwanese identity politics, and the rise of multiparty democracy affected museums and their representations of history, culture, ethnicity, and the environment in Taiwan? How do museums in Taiwan contribute to the shaping of new forms of historical memory and cultural identity? I am particularly interested in the transformation of museums in the post-martial law context, especially in the influence of the DPP through its campaign to “de-sinify” (去漢化) Taiwan—that is, its attempt to forge a unique history and culture for Taiwan that is not defined in terms of a cultural and historical relationship with the Mainland—and subsequent efforts by the KMT camp to “re-sinify” it. Although the complex issue of historical memory and Taiwan identity should not be reduced to a relationship with China, the looming presence of the Mainland is never far away from how and why the past in Taiwan is remembered in the ways it is. With the rise of nationalism and authoritarianism under Xi Jinping and with the 2019 protest movement in Hong Kong, that presence is being felt more keenly than ever.

My concern is with the political and ideological uses of the past. Museums have played an important role in Taiwan identity politics because they are very public and symbolic platforms; as such, they become magnets for debate and contention in Taiwan’s open public sphere. Proposals for new museums are greeted with much

discussion and debate, and the media then dissect and evaluate the resulting exhibitions. Political parties in power are key agents in the founding of new museums and the hiring of museum directors, who in turn assemble the curatorial teams that mount the exhibits. Although economic and urban development is another important motivation, the degree to which party politics has shaped the museum world in Taiwan is quite remarkable.

At least from a geopolitical perspective, Taiwan may be an obscure part of the world, a political no-man's-land, a nation without nation-state status—rendering it, as Shu-mei Shih (2003: 144) puts it, “insignificant” and “illegible”—but it is precisely this that makes the contestation over historical memory there so intense, so fascinating, and so important. The case of Taiwan tells us much about Cold War politics and its legacy in East Asia; about the role of culture and history in shaping identities in what is a multiply “postcolonial” landscape; and about the politics of historical memory in an emergent democracy potentially threatened by the Mainland. The example of Taiwan also forms a counterpoint to that of the PRC; in the Cold War era, both Taiwan and the PRC were single-party states, but Taiwan has evolved since then into a multiparty democracy with a strong civil society and public sphere. To be sure, issues of historical memory are contested in the PRC, but in Taiwan that contestation takes place not behind closed doors but in the media, in academia, and in the political arena for all to see. Juxtaposing exhibitionary culture in the PRC and Taiwan, as I do from time to time throughout the book, reveals much about how different politics and political systems influence and shape cultural identities and historical memories.

Many of the recent trends in remembering the past in Taiwan museums have been led by the DPP and/or cultural gatekeepers sympathetic to what is referred to as Taiwan “consciousness” or Taiwan “nativism” (本土化). I outline later in the introduction some of these trends, which inform a significant part of the analysis of museums throughout this volume. But it must be said that the KMT has not stood idly by while the DPP runs roughshod over the memory landscape. Particularly after 2008, when it was voted back into political power following eight years of DPP control, the KMT launched a “re-sinification” project akin to the de-sinification of DPP rule. With regard to political rhetoric, Jonathan Sullivan (2014) frames the recent shift in these terms:

My research of many of Ma's [Ma Ying-jeou, KMT president] speeches since 2008 shows that Taiwanese identity has all but disappeared from the presidential lexicon—with the notable, and transparently instrumental, exception of his election campaigns. There are signs that the Taiwanese have more pressing things on their minds than identity too: neither the Sunflower student occupation, nor the plethora of social protests that have mobilized tens of thousands of people, were, on the surface, fought in the name of Taiwanese identity. However, to think that we have reached a post-identity moment in Taiwan is misguided—and for pro-unificationists in Taiwan and China, wishful thinking. Taiwan's status is too fragile

and too contested for that: The latent identity cleavage exists, and at some point, it will resurface as a major driver of Taiwanese mass political behavior and elite political competition.¹

In January 2014, for example, the KMT-controlled Ministry of Education proposed changes to high school history textbooks that included the following: emphasizing Zheng Chenggong's 鄭成功 (Koxinga) ties to the Ming dynasty; referring to the Japanese era as the "colonial" era; and calling the return of Taiwan to Chinese control after the war a "glorious retrocession" (光復). The DPP responded with accusations that these changes were attempts to "re-sinify" or "de-Taiwanize" Taiwan history. Protests were organized in front of the ministry offices, and cities under DPP control, such as Tainan, said they would refuse to adopt the new curriculum.²

In her 2016 presidential inauguration speech and with the accompanying celebratory parade, Tsai Ing-wen sent a signal that the DPP would seek to restore some of the cultural "losses" suffered under eight years of KMT rule and its re-sinification efforts. Even as she issued calls for "unity" and "leaving behind the prejudices and conflicts of the past," Tsai proposed that a Truth and Reconciliation Commission be convened to "discover the truth" about historical grievances.³ Although she did not mention it by name, the injustices of February 28, 1947 (hereafter 2-28), when thousands of Taiwanese were killed on suspicion of insurrection against the newly established KMT regime, were clearly implied. Less subtle was the appearance, in the parade that followed the speech, of a stylized reenactment of the 2-28 incident. Moreover, just days before her inauguration, the historian and former director of the National Museum of Taiwan History, Wu Micha (吳密察), was appointed head of the Academia Historica (國史館), Taiwan's national archives.⁴ Chang Yen-hsien (張炎憲), who had held that position during the eight years of DDP rule from 2000 to 2008, was closely involved in researching 2-28 and other examples of KMT political persecution, so it seems likely that Wu will continue that work.⁵ In February 2017, Tsai declassified all official documents related to 2-28 (Horton 2017a). These developments came in tandem with a shift in economic orientation away from trade with mainland China toward interaction with Southeast Asia and India, referred to as the "new southbound policy" (新南向政策).

In Taiwan society, historical memory in general and exhibitionary culture in particular are contested in multiple ways and on multiple levels. First, the driving force behind the construction of museums and memorial sites in Taiwan has been political parties and their ideologies, and identity politics more generally. The

1. For more on this, see Lam/Liao 2011.

2. See *Taiwan Communiqué* 145 (January–February 2014): 13–16. URL: <http://www.taiwandc.org/twcom/tc145-int.pdf>. See also Tsoi 2015.

3. For an English translation of Tsai's speech, see <http://focustaiwan.tw/news/aip/201605200008.aspx>.

4. See <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2016/05/16/2003646384>. For information on the Academia Historica, see http://www.dnh.gov.tw/index_eng2.asp.

5. One product of Academia Historica research is the *Dictionary of the 2-28 Incident* (二二八事件辭典) (Zhang Yanxian, ed. 2008).

struggle has involved decisions about what new sites of memory to establish and what kinds of memories to exhibit at those sites. Second, once a site has been established, there is often a continuing struggle over the meaning of that site between political parties and their respective sympathizers, as the case of the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall (discussed in detail in Chapter 6) makes clear. Third, museums and their exhibits are then experienced differently by people with different backgrounds and political allegiances (Chen Jiali 2007). Take, for example, museums dedicated to human rights abuses under the Nationalists, such as Green Island Human Rights Culture Park (see Chapter 4). For a visitor sympathetic to the green camp, such sites can confirm their harshest opinions of the horrors of KMT rule. For someone in the blue camp, however, they can highlight how the KMT has overcome its authoritarian past and contributed to the democratization of Taiwan and the promotion of human rights. Those many Taiwanese who align with neither the KMT nor the DPP might react to such sites in more nuanced ways.⁶

Memory in post-martial law Taiwan is subject to all sorts of forces, and to reduce it to the political is inadequate for a full understanding. The same neoliberal economic forces at play in China and around the world can, of course, also be felt in Taiwan (Harvey 2007). This means that economic imperatives have led, on the one hand, to the destruction of many sites of historical and cultural significance and, on the other, to the renovation and rebranding of historical sites for tourism and for urban cultural enhancement. In the past few decades, museums in Taiwan have proliferated as sites of cultural consumption in the neoliberal leisure economy. With the opening of Taiwan to mainland Chinese tourists, big money is potentially at stake. Between 2008 to 2015, the annual number of “overseas Chinese” tourists visiting Taiwan—most of them from the Mainland—rose from 882,000 to about 5.5 million.⁷ And those tourists tend to have an appetite for sites associated with Cold War-era politics, in particular the figure of Chiang Kai-shek, a phenomenon I discuss in Chapter 6.

The commercialization and commodification of Taiwan society has, as on the Mainland, also fueled nostalgia. As critics like Svetlana Boym (2001) have highlighted, nostalgia can take multiple forms and stances, including conservative and radical, both of which can be found in Taiwan. The nostalgia for particular eras—one thinks immediately of the Japanese colonial era—is certainly politically driven, a counter to KMT Sinocentric historical narratives.

6. There are other political parties in Taiwan, but none have controlled either the presidency or the Legislative Yuan, institutions that have the power and resources to reshape cultural and educational policy. In 2015, as an outgrowth of the Sunflower Movement, a new political party was established called the New Power Party (時代力量). Founded by Freddy Lim, head of the heavy metal band Clithonic (閃靈), it explicitly rejected the two-party monopoly of the KMT and DPP, though its politics steer closer to the DDP camp (Laskai 2015). In his music, Lim has gone so far as to associate the KMT with the Nazi Party (see his video “Supreme Pain for the Tyrant” (破夜斬): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4jYsu5-TJQ8>). The party won five legislative seats in the 2016 election but is unlikely to ever break the two-party system.

7. See statistics from the Taiwan Tourism Bureau here: http://admin.taiwan.net.tw/statistics/year_en.aspx?no=15.

But it is perhaps just as valid to see this nostalgia as a reflection of general discontent with an alienating world in which familiar urban and rural spaces, and the communities associated with them, have been replaced with high-rise apartment complexes, looming skyscrapers, and elevated highways, not to mention all the noise and air pollution that attend such structures. Nostalgia for the Japanese colonial era can be seen in recent Taiwan films such as *Cape No. 7* (海角七號), *Kano*, and *Twa Tiu Tiann* (大稻埕), the latter a melodramatic comedy that reflects on the country's past through the story of a young man traveling back in time to 1920s Taiwan, when the country was under Japanese rule. But there is, at least in some social sectors, also much nostalgia for the KMT era, seen, for instance, in the preservation of military dependents' villages (眷村), which I discuss in Chapter 5, and in the Teresa Teng Memorial Hall (鄧麗君紀念館), a museum dedicated to the pop singer whose love songs were broadcast by shortwave radio to the Mainland during the Cold War as a form of KMT propaganda.⁸

Methodology

This book is a spin-off from an earlier study of museums of the postsocialist PRC (Denton 2014). In what follows, I occasionally make comparative reference to museums in China to suggest important parallels in the political uses and politicized representation of history in the PRC and Taiwan, but I also expose key differences in, for example, curatorial processes, funding, the definitions and interpretations of history, and the social and educational roles of museums. Although it is critically important to appreciate the different historical trajectories of the PRC and Taiwan and how museums and memorial spaces are products of and reactions to these trajectories, I also attempt to show how museums in these two contexts are subject to similar sorts of political, cultural, and economic influences. My motivation behind this comparative approach is intellectual, and I am not trying to weave together the historical experiences of China and Taiwan into some Sinocentric narrative.

For example, in the National Museum of China's Road to Revival exhibit—the exhibit on the history of modern China unveiled when the renovated museum opened in Beijing in 2011—we are presented with a view of the past in which the CCP's historical role is the main discursive thread; by contrast, the permanent exhibit in the National Museum of Taiwan History (NMTH), opened in the same year, is more oriented toward social history, the experiences of average people, and the collective transformations of Taiwan throughout its history of multiple colonizations. Both representations are political: the former's exhibit serves to legitimize the CCP by emphasizing its role in modernizing China, bringing it into the world, and restoring its former glories; the latter stresses social history as a way of forging an identification between the museumgoer and an idea of Taiwan as a nation with

8. See <http://fangkc.cn/2010/05/media-as-a-weapon/>.

a coherent history, a cultural origin, and a recognizable identity. Museums like the NMTH, which I discuss in detail in Chapter 2, must be more responsive to their constituency—the various peoples of Taiwan—than the National Museum of China, but like the latter they also seek to forge a collective identity centered around shared, though plural, memories.⁹

In this book I focus on politics, in the narrow *and* broad senses of the word. In the narrow sense, I am concerned with the role of the state and/or of political parties in promoting museums and influencing and shaping their constructions of the past. In a broader sense, I analyze the historical narratives of museum exhibits and tease out from them political and ideological meanings that are intertwined with changing social, political, and economic conditions. I am primarily concerned with the political motivations behind the founding of museums and the political resonances behind narratives of the past told through their exhibits. Of course, not all museums seek to establish narratives; indeed, the postmodern museum has deliberately sought to disrupt coherent narratives and in the process to question notions of truthful representation. But most of the museums I discuss here are state-funded and need to reach out to as broad a spectatorship as possible; as such, they tend not to present memories that are terribly radical or alternative or in some sort of postmodern mode.¹⁰

Indeed, in Taiwan, where memories once suppressed by the Nationalists have now entered the mainstream, the very notion of “alternative” memories is less clear than it is perhaps in China, where memories of the Great Famine or the Cultural Revolution, for instance, are suppressed in public exhibitionary culture and to address them in the context of a museum exhibition can be seen as subversive. Of course, historical memories in Taiwan were not always given free reign as they are today. In the Nationalist era, public expression of memories of the 2–28 Incident, for instance, would have been a dangerous gesture of defiance against the state. In Taiwan today, however, the past is ripe for the pickings, and seemingly any topic is acceptable. Furthermore, in democratic Taiwan, although the KMT certainly downplays the memory of 2–28 in its own discourse, it cannot, for obvious political reasons, dismiss it altogether. Today’s KMT is not the KMT of Chiang Kai-shek, and the degree to which the new KMT has incorporated into its own discourse elements associated with DPP nativist thinking is quite apparent. Meanwhile, the DPP for its part must accommodate the views of people—for example, mainlanders with sympathies for the KMT—who may not be part of their voting base. But these overlaps do not mean that the contestation over the meaning of the past is any less passionate.

Like my earlier book on museums in postsocialist China, this book is organized by museum type: history museums, literature museums, ethnographic museums, memorial halls for important political figures, archaeological museums,

9. For an insightful comparison of the two museums that arrives at similar conclusions, see Vickers 2013.

10. For an overview, in Chinese, of the narrative turn in museums, see Zhang Wanzhen 2014.

environmental and ecomuseums, and so on. I have taken this approach to highlight their varied ideological and discursive functions: each type of museum tells a different kind of story and thus serves a different kind of political and ideological function. Ecomuseums forge a collective attachment to the land. History museums create a narrative about who the Taiwanese are in the present by telling the story of where they have come from. Archaeology museums create a link between the present and the ancient past. And literature museums contribute to defining a national cultural identity, centered on great writers, their insights into the collective psyche, and their representations of the nation. Because they are less narrative-driven and less interwoven with issues of historical memory, I do not treat fine arts museums in this book.

My approach is generally narratological in that I analyze the stories that museum exhibits construct of the past. I then tie those stories into political, cultural, and economic contexts and motivations, exploring not only the exhibits themselves and the various media that museum exhibits make use of but also the architectural style and symbolic implications of museum buildings in their urban contexts. In short, I read museums as texts. Of course, as with any text, the narratives recounted in the museums I address here are subject to the personalities, politics, and interpretive preferences of individual visitors, and there is always a give-and-take relationship between the intended meaning of the exhibit and the subjectivity of the visitor. Individual visitors do not, I fully recognize, necessarily interpret or interact with exhibits in the ways curators might want. Although I occasionally refer to visitorship—how actual visitors engage with and understand the museums—my methodology is not in the visitor studies mode. I would not go as far as some museologists (e.g., Hooper-Greenhill 2000) in seeing the museum as a postmodern text whose meaning is not intrinsic but rather is brought to it solely by visiting spectators. Exaggerating the willingness or desire of visitors to read against the grain or ignore intended narratives can lead to a false impression of the meanings of museum exhibits.

A Short History of Museums in Taiwan

As on the Mainland, whose first museums were established by Western missionaries, and in Hong Kong, where the British set up the colony's first museums, museums in Taiwan have their origins in colonialism and imperialism. The first museum in Taiwan was founded by George Leslie Mackay, a Canadian Presbyterian missionary, in the late Qing at his home in Tamsui (Danshui), not far from Taipei. Mackay's museum displayed mostly ethnographic artifacts he had collected on his proselytizing travels around the island, about which Mackay (1896: 48) wrote:

But the subject [natural history of Taiwan] was too important and too interesting to be neglected, and so in all our travels, establishing churches and exploring in



Figure 0.1: One of the original buildings of Oxford College in Danshui. It currently houses a museum about George Mackay.

the savage territory, I carried with me my geological hammer, chisel, and lens, and brought back on nearly every occasion some valuable contribution to my museum at Tamsui. I ever sought to train my students to have eyes to see and minds to understand nature's great message in sea and grove and mountain gorge.

From what was at first a space that would “otherwise [be] a parlor in our house” (288), the museum evolved over the years into the Tamshui Oxford Museum, the school museum of what is now Aletheia University (真理大學, formerly Oxford University 牛津學堂, which Mackay founded in 1882) (see Figure 0.1).¹¹

In recent years, Mackay has been hailed as Taiwan's answer to the Mainland's Norman Bethune—the Canadian doctor who worked selflessly to save patients during the War of Resistance against Japan and who was later praised by Mao Zedong—in the sense that his image has been shaped by Taiwan nationalists into that of a “Taiwan consciousness hero” (Vynckier 2008: 251). Although now acclaimed as a foreigner who loved the Taiwanese people, Mackay shipped boxes of artifacts from Taiwan back to Canada, where they were added to the collection of the Royal

11. The building is presently devoted to exhibitions on Mackay and the history of the university and is no longer a natural history museum. For information on Mackay's residence in Tamsui, see Zeng and Zhang 2016.

Ontario Museum in Toronto. Some were later sent back to Taiwan for special displays on Mackay, part of the heroizing of this figure on the 100th anniversary of his death in 1901. One of these was called the Dr. Mackay Collection of Formosan Aboriginal Artifacts (held at the Shung Ye Museum of Formosan Aborigines, which I discuss in Chapter 8); the other, Dr. Mackay's Love for Taiwan: A Pictorial Exhibition, held at the National Taiwan Museum (國立臺灣博物館; NTM). The tendency to make Mackay a "modernizing" hero is, as Mark Munsterhjelm (2004; 2014a) has argued, also the product of Taiwan-Canadian complicity in representing aborigines—many of Mackay's artifacts were of Taiwan's aboriginal cultures—as childlike victims in need of salvation and protection.

Mackay's museum was founded before the Japanese colonization of Taiwan, but when the Japanese authorities took over Taiwan in 1895, they supported it, likely as a manifestation of the civilizing modernity they saw themselves bestowing on the Taiwanese people.¹² Unlike the destruction of museums and the dismantling of their collections that occurred on the Mainland during the Second World War, the Japanese colonizers in Taiwan set out to develop and promote museums and exhibitions. The decades of colonial rule have been described as a "burgeoning" period in Taiwan museum development, one that resulted in the founding of some twenty museums.¹³ Most notably, in 1908 the Japanese colonial authorities established the Museum of the Colonial Administration (Sotokufu hakubutsukan 台灣總督府博物館), a natural history and ethnography museum, built in the neoclassical style favored in Japan at the time, that reflected the "scientific colonialism" of the Japanese occupiers (Allen 2007: 189). The building the museum would eventually occupy was completed in 1915 in the northern section of Taipei's New Park, now called the February 28 Peace Park. With the completion of the museum, a colonial political symbolism had been created along an axis running from the railroad station in the north (outside of the park) to the museum, to a central fountain, and finally to a statue of Goto Shinpei, who was Taiwan's first colonial civil administrator (Allen 2007). Indeed, the Museum of the Colonial Administration is situated in a park setting very much like that of Tokyo's earliest museums, established in Ueno Park (Allen 2012: 91).¹⁴

12. In an April 1, 1896, letter, Bella, one of MacKay's daughters, writes: "Pa's museum is getting full again and very interesting. Japanese come in large numbers to see it and buy his book 'From Far Formosa.' I caught a butterfly and put it in the museum." And in a December 16 letter of the same year, she writes: "The Governor General [top Japanese official in Taiwan] and Officers called at our house to see Pa. The Governor was so glad to see the museum in our house" (Forsberg 2012: 64).

13. See the Taiwan-based Chinese Association of Museums website at <http://www.cam.org.tw/english/about.htm>. Of course, the Japanese occupation of Taiwan was very different from that of the Mainland. Taiwan was much more fully incorporated into the Co-prosperity Sphere and was used as an emblem of Japanese coloniality.

14. The models for the Museum of the Colonial Administration came from imperial Japan, which had itself modeled its museums and expositions on those of Great Britain, in particular the 1851 Great Exhibition in the Crystal Palace and its descendant, the South Kensington Museum (eventually renamed the Victoria and Albert Museum) (Tseng 2008: 39–40).

The history of this museum and its changing names parallels the history of modern Taiwan itself: first, it was a space for the Japanese colonizers to display their dominion over the island and a model for their larger imperial aspirations in Asia (thus, the Museum of the Colonial Administration);¹⁵ after the Second World War, it became a propaganda vehicle for the Nationalists (Taiwan Provincial Museum); still later, it was a key cultural institution involved in reshaping Taiwan identity in the post-martial law era (the National Taiwan Museum); finally, it was a creative center in the restoration of the Taipei downtown core and the refashioning of Taipei as a global city (the National Taiwan Museum System). I discuss this most recent stage later in the introduction.

Taiwan was also on display in expositions organized by the colonial government or by the government in Japan. These expositions were mounted in Taiwan itself, in Japan for the consumption of Japanese citizens, and even in the West—for instance, the 1910 Japan–British Exhibition in London was organized and funded by the Japanese government to improve its image abroad (which had been sullied by its growing imperialist activities in East Asia) and to encourage the world to recognize Japan as a modern and powerful nation. In addition to exhibits on Japanese industry, arts and culture, and social life, four display halls were devoted to Japan's colonial possessions: Taiwan, Korea, and Manchuria. The Taiwan Hall included Taiwan products—tea, rice, camphor, and sugar—but also on display were artifacts of Taiwan's aboriginal peoples.¹⁶ The most extravagant display of Taiwan's colonial past and future was the Taiwan Exposition of 1935, which Joseph Allen (2005) describes as a kind of “world's fair” for the exhibition of Japan's colonial possessions and imperial aspirations (see Figure 0.2 on p. 12).¹⁷

The museum landscape changed radically after the Nationalists came to Taiwan in 1945. Shortly after gaining control of the island, they issued a document—*Outline on the Plan for the Taiwan Takeover* (台灣接管計畫綱要)—in which, among other things, a cultural policy of “increasing national consciousness, eliminating slave thought” (增強民族意識，廓清奴化思想) was promulgated.¹⁸ As part of a program to cleanse Taiwan of the Japanese colonial legacy, in 1945 the Museum of the Colonial Administration was renamed the Taiwan Provincial Museum, whose purpose was now to “cultivate patriotic spirit, enhance the culture of the fatherland, and construct a new Taiwan with the Three People's Principles” (Wei-I Lee 2007: 175). Between 1947 (the year of the 2–28 Incident) and 1949, the museum reflected a Nationalist agenda, with exhibits such as “Chiang Kai-shek and the War against Japan” and “Sun Yat-sen and the National Revolution” (Wei-I Lee 2007: 176). The

15. For a history of collections and displays at the colonial era museum, see Li Zining 2008.

16. For a discussion of the Japan–British Exhibition, see Hu Jiayu 2012. The most detailed history of “exhibitions” in the colonial period is Lü Shaoli 2011.

17. For a wonderfully descriptive and heavily illustrated overview of the exposition, see Cheng 2004. For an analysis of contemporary fiction that critiqued the exposition, see Liu Shu-qin 2015.

18. Cited in Huang Yingzhe 2007: 29. See also Wei-I Lee 2007. For the whole report, see Chen and Chen 1989: 1: 49.



Figure 0.2: Tourist map for the 1935 Taiwan Exposition. Source: Cheng Jiahui 2004: np. Used with permission of Yuanliu Publishing.

Ministry of Education saw museums, along with the promotion of Mandarin and school improvements, as keys to a “citizens education” (國民教育).¹⁹ Museum exhibitions in the 1950s also promoted an anti-communist agenda and the Nationalist goal of “restoring the country” (復國) by retaking the Mainland.

Generally, these museums and their exhibits presented a Sinocentric view of Chinese culture consistent with the Nationalist position that Taiwan was part of China and that it had dominion, however illusory, over the Mainland. Typical of new museums and memorial sites in the Nationalist era were the National Museum of History (國立歷史博物館, est. 1955), the National Palace Museum (國立故宮博物院, est. 1965), the Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hall (國父紀念館, est. 1972), and the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall (中正紀念堂, est. 1980). These museums and memorial halls reflected the Nationalist political agenda by contributing to the “cult of Chiang Kai-shek,” as Jeremy Taylor (2006) has put it, or to the Sinocentric view of Chinese history. Although its party-centered politics resonated with revolutionary history museums of the Mao era on the Mainland, these Nationalist memorial sites in Taiwan were also infused with explicitly Confucian ethical values that were anathema to the Communist regime. Meanwhile, martyrs’ memorials (see Chapter

19. See “Taiwan sheng zhengfu gongzuo baogao” 台灣省政府工作報告 (Working report of the Taiwan provincial government), in Chen and Chen 1989: 1: 416–30.

3) were erected around Taiwan to commemorate those who had died fighting for the Nationalist cause, from the Xinhai Revolution that led to the founding of the Republic of China in 1912 to the civil wars with the communists in the 1930s and 1940s.

The particular history of Taiwan and the cultures and histories of the Hoklo, Hakka, and aboriginal peoples were not legitimate topics for museum exhibition under the Nationalists. Nor did museums exhibit the history of Taiwan before the immigration of Han Chinese from the Mainland. Also excluded from exhibitionary purview, for obvious reasons, was any attention to the Japanese colonial era, whose cultural influence the Nationalists were struggling to erase. All of these facets of Taiwan's history would become significant foci of exhibitionary culture in the post-martial law era.

Perhaps because Taiwan was poor or because of the constant and tangible threat from the Mainland, the Nationalist government established few museums in the 1950s. Only a dozen or so museums were built during that decade. But by the late 1970s, as Taiwan's economy began to develop, another thirty had been added, making the total number of museums in Taiwan in 1980 around forty (British Council 2006: 4). Most of these museums were clustered in and around the Taipei area, the capital of the "province" and the center of KMT power, leaving the rest of Taiwan a relative museum vacuum.

As on the Mainland, which saw a boom in museum construction first in the wake of the Cultural Revolution and then again with the market reforms of the 1990s, the real explosion of museum development in Taiwan came with political liberalization. As Taiwan took baby steps toward democratization through the 1980s, another forty museums were built. In 1981, the Council for Cultural Affairs (行政院文化建設委員會, often abbreviated as 文建會, CCA) promoted the decentralization of the museum industry and sponsored the construction of new museums outside Taipei. Before 1981, there had been very few "local museums," one being the Lukang Folk Arts Museum (鹿港民俗文物館), which was opened in 1973. As part of this state-sponsored effort to decentralize Taiwan museums, a preparatory committee was established in 1981 to develop a "national" (國立) museum of science in Taichung, the first part of which was eventually opened in 1986. Many local museums, sponsored by county and municipal governments, were established in the 1980s and 1990s. The Yilan County Historical Museum (宜蘭縣史館), for example, was established in 1993 to promote interest and pride in local history and culture. Another spark for the development of local museums was the "comprehensive community building" (社群總體營造) policy implemented by the CCA in 1994 to rebuild local communities, which had been devastated by pollution, years of migration to the cities, and other problems (Wan-I Lin 2015). Indeed, as on the Mainland, local museums have proliferated in Taiwan over the past three decades, but the Taiwan local museums tend to be much more concerned with community input and outreach than their Mainland counterparts, which often link local

and regional identities with economic competition and municipal branding and in that sense are more state-driven than community-oriented.

The notion of “community” (社群)—how to reflect it and serve it and how to bring the museum to it—has become a key concept in the Taiwan museum world.²⁰ When a museum is first proposed in Taiwan, much discussion is generated about its place in the community where it is to be built, its contributions to that community, and how to get the community involved in and benefiting from it. As I discuss in Chapter 9, the discourse surrounding the creation of Gold Ecological Park (黃金博物館區), which is billed as a “community ecological museum park,” is typical of this concern with community interests and integrating the museum into the community. Even national museums are couched in terms of local communities. For instance, the Tainan Science Park Branch (南科館) of the National Museum of Prehistory (國立臺灣史前博物館, NMP) is given the mandate of being a “community museum.”

Local communities have developed their own museums, sometimes without the help of museum professionals. Take for instance the Baimi Clog Museum (白米木屐館), which was founded in 1997 in a village to the south of Yilan City. The county government encouraged the development of such sites as responses to the economic decline of the area and long-standing social and environmental problems. In the process, local people in Baimi rediscovered a lost art of clog-making and then, with the help of a government empowerment fund, established a tiny community museum to display their art. Objects in the museum were all “touchable,” and no rules of the kind that normally apply in a museum were established. From this small museum emerged the idea of seeing the entire village of Baimi as a community museum: the town came to market itself as Baimi Clog Village.²¹ The museum is now bigger and more sophisticated than it once was, and it has been incorporated into a larger county-wide effort to make Yilan a “living museum” (Xiao Yuzheng 2014), under the slogan “Yilan is itself a museum” (宜蘭就是一座博物館) (see Chapter 9).

Between 1990 and 2005, some 300 new museums were built in Taiwan (British Council 2006: 4). The CCA, which was established in 1981, has been an important state instrument in instigating this development, although private foundations—sometimes in league with political parties—are also often involved in raising funds for and managing new museums.²² By 2002, there were, according to Tu Chengsheng (杜正勝), then head of the National Palace Museum (NPM), 450 museums in Taiwan—that is, one museum for every 80 square kilometers or 51,000 people (Fang 2002).

20. The community orientation of Taiwan museums reflects a recent trend in Western museology that stresses the relationship of the museum to the community or communities. For studies on this topic, see, for example: Abt 2011; Bennett 2011; Crooke 2011; Hooper-Greenhill 2011; Karp, Kreamer, and Lavine 1992. A 2006 museum studies conference held in Taiwan was titled *Taiwan Museum Industry at a Crossroads: Professionalism, Community, and Sustainability* (Yan Shangqing 2007).

21. For in-depth discussions of the Baimi Clog Museum, see Jiali Chen 2002 and Hsin-yi Lu 2002: 115–32.

22. For a comparative (Taiwan/UK) look at museum governance and funding, see Tzeng 2009.

When the DPP came to power in 2000, it strongly promoted Taiwanese history and culture through the CCA, the Ministry of Education, and arts and cultural institutions.²³ With the rise of the Taiwanese consciousness movement and with the impetus of the DPP, museum development took at least four new directions in the post-martial law era.

Multiculturalism

In a strategic break with the cultural essentialism implicit in the Sinocentric model, museums in the post-martial law era have emphasized a new multicultural identity composed of Taiwan's heterogeneous cultures (aboriginal, "foreign," and various Chinese ethnic cultures). Edward Vickers (2007a; 2009) was perhaps the first to make such an observation about Taiwan museums, and I hope in this book to build on and expand his work. Museums take this route in order to distinguish Taiwan's cultural identity from KMT Sinocentrism, and also from an (imagined) essentialism of Chinese culture on the Mainland. Indeed, the very origins of Taiwan are now constructed as multicultural: the mingling of the Dutch, Spanish, Chinese, Manchu, and Japanese cultures that influenced Taiwan beginning in the seventeenth century gave birth to a particular Taiwan identity. These multicultural origins in turn became a foundation for today's pluralist and democratic society. Central to the construction of this multicultural identity has been the representation of aboriginal cultures. In a variety of exhibitionary spaces (e.g., Shung Ye Museum of Aborigines 順益台灣原住民博物館, Ketagalan Cultural Center 凱達格蘭文化館, Shihsanhang Museum of Archaeology 十三行博物館, and the National Museum of Prehistory 國立臺灣史前文化博物館), the display of aboriginal cultures (and the prehistoric cultures of ancient Taiwan thought to be their forebears) has been embraced and promoted as part of the forging of a new cultural identity for Taiwan, one that is diverse and heterogeneous. This discursive exploitation of aboriginal images for nation-building in Taiwan is akin to the way "ethnic minority" groups are used in the political discourse in the PRC.

This multiethnic orientation has been central to DDP identity politics. As Jens Damm (2012: 86) discusses, as early as 1989, the DDP adopted the term "ethnic group" (族群) for "Taiwan's four great ethnic groups" (台灣四大族群): the Hoklo, Hakka, Mainlanders, and Aborigines.²⁴ For Allen Chun (2007), these ethnic groups—as well as such "ethnic" categories as *bensheng* 本省 (this province) and

23. The Ministry of Education sponsored changes in textbooks and Taiwan content in middle school curricula to increase awareness of Taiwan history and culture. It also developed, with the National Central Library, the Window on Taiwan (走讀臺灣) website to promote the study of Taiwan history and culture (<http://readtw.ncl.edu.tw>).

24. As Michael Rudolf (2004) says, the term "ethnic group" was adopted because it reflected an emic anthropological perspective on ethnicity, whereas the more conventional term "ethnic nationality" (民族) was etically imposed. An approach to ethnicity that considers self-identity allows the Hoklo and Hakka, for instance, to be considered ethnic groups rather than part of a larger Han ethnicity.

waisheng 外省 (outside the province)—have been abused not only by politicians but by academics as well. Moreover, Chun recognizes that both major political parties have contributed to this “indigenization”—they just have different versions of it. Take, for instance, the Ketagalan Institute (not to be confused with the Ketagalan Cultural Center discussed in Chapter 8), personally established by Chen Shui-bian in 2003. According to a *Taipei Times* article, “[t]he institute was Chen’s brainchild and was founded to allow future leaders of the country from all backgrounds to have a forum in which to discuss issues in Taiwanese society, map out strategies for the nation’s future, and consider how to promote Taiwan to the international community” (C. Hong 2004). Among the “courses” offered at the institute in the spring of 2004 was “Aboriginal Research Studies.” The institute’s website makes its political intentions explicit:

The Ketagalan Institute embodies President Chen’s vision of democracy becoming deep-rooted in Taiwan. The name “Ketagalan” pays tribute to Taiwan’s tribal ancestry and recognizes the country’s ethnic heritage while highlighting the diversity of its modern culture—one whose character is interwoven with indigenous ancestry and historical remnants of Spanish, Dutch, Japanese, Chinese influence. Through its advocacy for democratic ideals, the Ketagalan Institute seeks to promote harmony in Taiwan and to integrate Taiwan’s voice of democracy with the world.²⁵

This discourse has all the elements of the DPP political and cultural vision: historical rootedness in Taiwan, not China; ethnic diversity in contrast to the ethnic homogeneity of the Sinocentric model; and democratic pluralism.

Another key element in the forging of this multicultural identity is memory of the Japanese colonial era. At the end of the Second World War, when the Nationalists recovered Taiwan from Japanese control, they instituted a program of “de-Japanization” (去日本化), which sought to purge Taiwan of Japanese linguistic, cultural, and educational influences. Before the lifting of martial law, the colonial era had been off-limits to historians and public intellectuals. Beginning in the 1980s, members of the *dangwai* (黨外, “outside the Party”—that is, political groups that were not connected to the KMT) movement grew interested in colonial-era history as a counterweight to KMT history. They found in the Taiwan people’s resistance to colonial rule a Taiwanese spirit they saw themselves as carrying on in the struggle against KMT “colonial rule” (Hsiao 2000: 157–62). Since the 1990s, there has been a kind of “new remembering” of the colonial era that has drawn attention not only to the positive modernization that Taiwan experienced under Japanese rule, but also, somewhat ironically, to the colonial era as the very origin of Taiwan nativist consciousness. In other words, it was during the colonial era that the people of Taiwan began to think of themselves as Taiwanese, as more than subjects of the Japanese empire and more than sons and daughters of the Chinese dragon. This revisionist “procolonial historiography” (Taylor 2005; Amae 2011) can be found in the exhibits of several

25. See <http://www.ketagalan.org.tw>.

post-martial law museums I discuss in this book, including the 2-28 Memorial Hall and the National Museum of Taiwan History.

Collective Memories of the Traumatic Past

Since the lifting of martial law, events such as 2-28 and the Formosa Incident of 1979 (when a group of dissidents protesting the lack of human rights in Taiwan were arrested), the memory of which had been repressed by the Nationalist regime, have been memorialized in museums and other spaces. In some exhibitionary spaces, this traumatic past is the defining feature of the national experience, a climactic chapter in the island's national narrative. In these narratives, the traumatic collective memories of the past constitute an affective foundation for the birth of a new kind of nation in the wake of KMT totalitarianism. The confronting of the traumatic past also serves to set Taiwan apart from the Mainland, which has refused, at least officially, to deal with the traumatic events of the Maoist past. In various chapters in this book, I investigate the emergence of history museums, such as the 2-28 Memorial Hall, Ching-mei Human Rights Culture Park, and Green Island Human Rights Culture Park, that exhibit the memory of Nationalist violence and human rights abuses in Taiwan. These sites were initiated and promoted by the green camp but have been accepted, to varying degrees, by members of the blue camp.

Taiwan Connected to the World

Museums also emphasize in their exhibits Taiwan's place in global history—its role on the transnational circuit of cultural and economic exchange, and the interrelationship between Taiwan and foreign nations (obviously the Netherlands and Japan figure prominently)—as well as its connections to Austronesia. In a diplomatic climate in which its status as a nation is problematic, to say the least, Taiwan has sought to forge a key place for itself in the history of migration, global trade, and interactions among Western, Asian, and Oceanic cultures. In some museum contexts, Taiwan's culture, history, and identity have been refashioned as "oceanic"; unlike "continental" cultures, such as that of the Mainland, oceanic cultures are open to the world, tolerant of cultural diversity, and energized and transformed by interactions with other nations.²⁶ This embracing of the oceanic stands in stark contrast to earlier negative representations of Taiwan as an island "beyond the seas" (海外), a term that suggested both Taiwan's separation from China and its isolation, "far off on the edge of the ocean," as Emma Teng (2004: 36–38) has described Qing representations of the island.

26. See, for example, Ge Sining 2005; Shi Shouqian 2004.

Even the National Palace Museum, which was founded by the KMT to showcase Taiwan as the true propagator of the Chinese cultural tradition, has participated in this new oceanic orientation toward the world. Under Tu Cheng-sheng's tutelage, the museum has mounted exhibitions related to Taiwan history and culture.²⁷ From January to April 2003, the museum held an exhibition titled *Ilha Formosa: The Emergence of Taiwan on the World Scene in the 17th Century*.²⁸ The exhibition explored the Dutch colonial period as the beginning of Taiwan history, a view that certainly conflicts with standard Sinocentric approaches to Taiwan and also emphasizes the transnational forces at play in the birth of Taiwan as a nation. The introduction on the English website reads:

The magnitude of the changes that shook Taiwan in the 17th century has few precedents in world history. . . . One witnesses the vigor and global orientation of those rejected by the orthodox society of the Chinese. One realizes, too, that the presence of the Dutch on the island was not as exploitive as the overly simplistic historical account would have it. . . . Probing further, one would even learn of the "modernity" of the maritime kingdom of Cheng Ch'eng-kung [Zheng Chenggong] and his successors, and of the accidental and inevitable causes that had transformed Taiwan into a settlement of immigrants. These elements, to be sure, constitute the political, social, and cultural foundation upon which Taiwan was built.²⁹

The cover of the exhibition catalog shows a map of Taiwan from the Dutch era with Taiwan "on its side" (with the east at the top) and no mainland visible. The introduction puts Taiwan at the "center of the East Asian maritime traffic" and stresses the history of Taiwan's "emergence on the world scene." The exhibit expresses the global cultural attitude that is at the heart of Taiwan's new self-identity in the post-martial law era and that contrasts sharply and ironically with Taiwan's weakening political position in the world. This does not mean that the museum is projecting a fantasy in which Taiwan is a major player in global politics; rather, it stresses a new cultural attitude that looks boldly out to the world and not timidly over its shoulder at the Mainland.

Other museums emphasize Taiwan's cultural and historical connections to Southeast Asia and the Pacific Islands, defining in the process Taiwan as an "oceanic" nation. In 2005 the National Museum of History, another bastion of the Sinocentric historical narrative, mounted its first permanent Taiwan-related exhibit, titled

27. The catalog foreword, written by Tu, who later became the DPP's minister of education, puts it this way: "The National Palace Museum is home to one of the finest collections of Chinese art from archaic times to pre-modern days. While the holdings are Han Chinese in nature, not of any pertinence to Taiwan, the Museum as a national institution has as its unwavering goal of assuming a more active stance to introduce its audiences to the island's historical and cultural past. The staging of exhibitions such as this one, to be sure, is an effective approach; yet, it should reach beyond the mere installation and presentation of artifacts to arrive at the realm of cultural and historical interpretation" (Shi Shouqian 2004: 3).

28. For a review, see Frazier 2003a. For an overview, see Shi Shouqian 2004 and the museum website: <http://www.npm.gov.tw/exhibition/formosa/english/index.htm>. Page has been removed from the site.

29. <http://www.npm.gov.tw/exhibition/formosa/english/01.htm>. Page has been removed from the site.

Oceanic Taiwan: A Dialogue between the People and the Island. Again, this exhibit emphasizes Taiwan's history of contact with the world beyond its shores.

These strategies are part of the larger de-sinification movement that seeks to pull Taiwan away from Chinese history and culture. They also assert a global importance to Taiwan that it lacks in the realm of diplomacy and geopolitics. For instance, the Museum of World Religions in Taipei, treated in Chapter 10, places Taiwan at the nexus of multiple religious influences from around the world: Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, Daoism, Sikhism, and Shinto. The museum also seems to assert, more grandly, Taiwan's role in fomenting peace among nations divided by religious intolerance. This kind of internationalist museum, the likes of which cannot be found on the Mainland, seeks to insert Taiwan into the world.

Archaeology and the Forging of a Prehistoric National Origins

The Nationalists suppressed interest in local Taiwan archaeology because its findings might have undermined the Sinocentric narrative. Since the end of martial law, a number of nation-level and local archaeology museums, which I discuss in Chapter 1, have explored the history of Taiwan before the arrival of Han Chinese from the Mainland. These museums have forged a narrative of the "prehistoric" origins of Taiwan history. Museums such as the Shihsanhang Museum and the National Museum of Prehistory serve to tie the people of Taiwan to the land that produced the archaeological artifacts on display in their exhibits, not to mention to the memory of the peoples that originally created the artifacts.

As I have stressed here, the museum field in Taiwan tends to be shaped by the interests of its two main political parties. When the DPP came to power and promoted, through museums and other cultural institutions, Taiwan consciousness and the forging of a Taiwan national identity, members of the KMT fired back. In 2003, Lien Chan, then chairman of the KMT, criticized the DPP for appropriating the cultural realm for political purposes, including by turning the National Museum of History into a Taiwan history museum and proposing that a branch of the National Palace Museum house only Taiwan things (Sandy Huang 2003). For the Nationalists, the *coup de grâce* came in May 2007, when the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall, which I discuss in Chapter 5, was converted into the National Taiwan Democracy Memorial Hall. Back in power in 2008, the Nationalists began to restore their own historical vision through museums and cultural institutions, though surveys suggest (as discussed earlier) that DPP efforts to instill Taiwanese consciousness have been largely successful and may have permanently changed the way the people of Taiwan see themselves.³⁰ We see in Taiwan museums today

30. A 2009 survey reveals that 67.1 percent of the people in Taiwan see themselves primarily as Taiwanese, 11.5 percent as Chinese, and 18.1 percent as dual. See <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2009/05/28/2003444751>. A 2016 survey puts the first figure at 73%: <http://www.thenewslens.com/article/38069>.

multiple tensions between (1) Taiwanese identity and Chinese identity; (2) a strong concern with local culture and Taiwan nationalism; and (3) Taiwan nationalism and an embrace of a transnational cosmopolitan ethos. Taiwan society is a highly polarized one, along both political and ethnic lines, but many Taiwanese and many Taiwan museum exhibitions manage to negotiate these tensions quite easily and fluidly. Indeed, in recent years some consensus seems to have emerged between the two political camps in terms of several of the themes discussed above—for example, multiculturalism, global Taiwan, and human rights. Those themes will be interwoven through the book.

Museums, Urban Development, and Creative Capital

Seeing exhibitionary culture and museums in post-martial law Taiwan purely through a political lens misses much. Funding is, of course, an abiding issue for museum directors in Taiwan and around the world. Museums have to adjust their collections and exhibitions, and sometimes even their primary mandate, to survive in an era of declining state support. In response to the Asian economic crisis of the late 1990s, state and private funding for museums in Taiwan decreased, forcing them to find innovative ways to survive (Rita Fang 2002). In 2002, the National Museum of History in Taipei hosted the Fourth Forum of Museum Directors, a conference dedicated to the topic of the relationships among culture, tourism, and museums (Lin Boyou 2002*b*). The conference centered on the economic role of museums, recognizing that museums not only preserve cultural artifacts but “also enhance the quality of tourism and the development of many local cultural industries” (6). This reflects a reorientation for the museum world in Taiwan toward an enhanced recognition of the commercial and economic role of museums.

A striking development in museum culture in Taiwan in recent years has been the linking of museums to urban development and the enhancement of creative capital, seen perhaps most visibly in the case of the National Taiwan Museum (NTM) and its effort to revitalize itself.³¹ I discuss recent transformations at that museum in some detail because they are representative of changes more broadly in the museological landscape in Taiwan and because I do not discuss this important museum elsewhere in the book. As noted earlier, it was founded in 1908 by the Japanese colonial administration.³² Grand and elegant though it was, by the early 2000s the building was showing its age and had become too small for the museum's extensive collection. In 2006 the museum began a radical transformation: in its effort to become a “world class natural history museum” and with the support of the Council for Cultural Affairs/Ministry of Culture, the museum launched the

31. For more on the linking of museums and creative industries, see June Chu 2004, who discusses an effort initiated in the early 2000s by the Executive Yuan to support culture industries as an important stimulus to economic growth.

32. For more on this museum, see also Li Zining and Ouyang Shengzhi 2015.

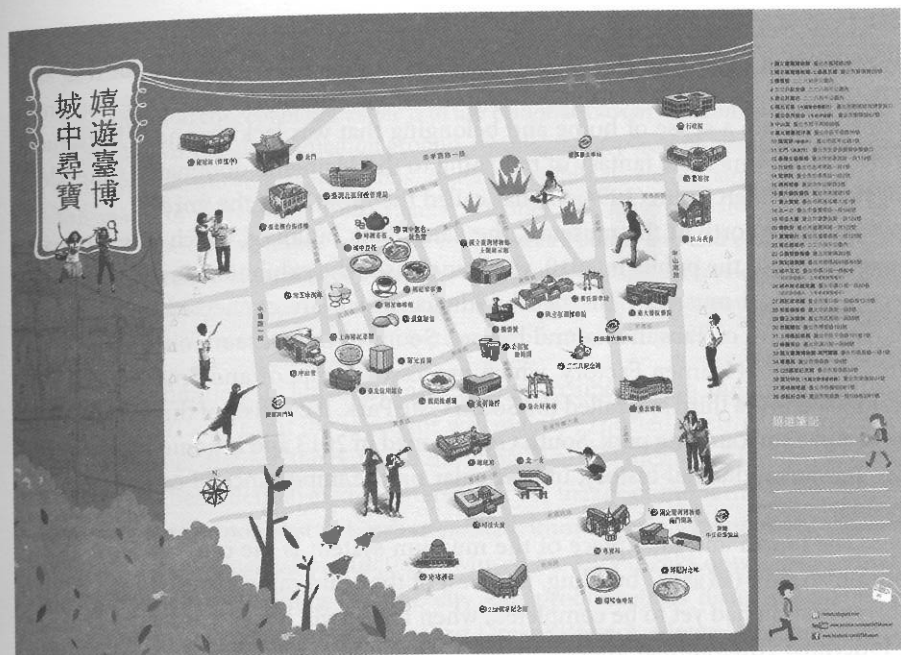


Figure 0.3: Map accompanying the Musemble City exhibition. Image provided by the National Taiwan Museum.

“National Taiwan Museum System” (國立臺灣博物館系統), comprised of the museum proper and several other Japanese-era buildings in the surrounding area and centered around the idea of Taiwan “modernity” (現代性).³³ The “system” concept was developed for a variety of reasons: to increase exhibition space for the collection; to raise the museum’s visibility in the urban landscape and thus make it a more viable and impactful cultural enterprise; to preserve colonial-era architecture in the downtown core; and to revitalize the heart of downtown Taipei, parts of which had become rather seedy. A tourist map of the area produced by the museum shows how the various sites that make up the system are linked together and have created a new cultural brand for downtown Taipei (see Figure 0.3).

The “system” concept marks a move away from the museum’s traditional focus on natural history and ethnography and toward the theme of “modernity.” It implicitly links Taiwan’s present modernity with the modernization program of the colonial past. As suggested above, this positive representation of the Japanese colonial era—its contribution to Taiwan’s modernization, its engendering of Taiwan consciousness and identity, and so on—is a recurring theme in post-martial law

33. For information on the plan, see the museum’s 2006 Annual Report, GLTWBVG 2006. For the focus on “modernity,” see Wang Zhihong 2010.

exhibitionary culture. The strategy is part of the broader distancing from the hegemony of “Chineseness” in the construction of Taiwan’s identity, but it is also, viewed in less negative terms, a forthright attempt to reconcile with the past in an effort to create a sense of home and belonging that was lacking under Nationalist rule, during which the fantasy of returning to the Mainland dominated state ideology—what Allen Chun (1994: 67) has called the “politics of the unreal.”

Directly north of the museum, the Land Bank building, which was renovated and opened to the public in 2010, vastly increased the exhibition and storage space of the original museum. The two buildings, which are connected underground, house displays of Taiwan’s natural history. South of the museum on the site of the former Taipei Nanmen Factory, which processed camphor and opium during the colonial era, is a third site called the South Gate Park. It consists of three main buildings and a surrounding park. South Gate opened in 2013 and is home to exhibitions on Taiwan’s industrial history, in particular on the importance of camphor to that history.

The fourth and final piece of the museum system is the old Taiwan Railways administrative (鐵道部) building, just west of the main railway station. As of 2019, its renovation had yet to be completed; when it is, it will house exhibits on “Taiwan Modernity.” The railroad system, first developed during the Japanese colonial era, has long been a source of pride in Taiwan and a symbol of its modernity. As a museum publication puts it, the railroad is “a microcosm of modern state bureaucratic organization; the railroad system also links together different places, groups, products, and information, and enhances the unification of a system of space and the standardization of time measurement; in transcending the speed of travel beyond that of man power and animal power, the railroad is thus an important representative of the modern time-space order.”³⁴ In changing the spatial connections among people and their relationship to time, the railroad is an apt symbol of the nation and the various ties (pun intended) that hold it together. This new museum will not only link present conceptions of Taiwan’s identity to the colonial past but also help symbolically cement the notion that although it may be comprised of various ethnic groups speaking different languages and dialects, it is unified around a shared experience of modernity.³⁵

Investing a city with a cultural aura is, of course, an important strategy in marketing its global image and developing its economic potential. If Taiwan is not a nation in the eyes of the world community, at least Taipei can become a “global city” with a cultural infrastructure rivaling those of metropolitan centers around the world. This connection between the museum system and the urban infrastructure was highlighted in a 2015–2016 special exhibition on the 100th anniversary of the

34. See Wang Zhihong 2010: 8. For this idea of the compression of space and time in modernity, see Schivelbusch 1986.

35. Another railway museum is in the planning stages for a different site, on the grounds of the former Taipei Railway Workshop (臺北機廠). See <https://trw.moc.gov.tw>.

museum called *Musemble City: A Modern Dream Plan* (夢幻博物城：現代性的尋夢計畫). As the museum website puts it:

The exhibition concept of *musemble* is to use National Taiwan Museum as a matrix and old town Taipei as exhibition ground. By integrating places of memory in the vicinity—museums, quasi-museums, historical buildings, etc.—it aims to establish spaces of movement for experiential activities. The matrix expands from the central museum and linked by “check-ins” of smart-phone app and establishes a spatial system of interconnections. The virtual system inspires cross-disciplinary dialogue among citizens about literature, arts, and music, and constructs a city dialect (*glossolaliadella citta*) and narratives of collective memories.³⁶

The special exhibition included an introductory exhibit within the museum itself (Guo Zhaoli 2015: 17), but the spectator was mainly expected to stroll the streets of downtown Taipei discovering both its surviving “lieux de mémoire” (記憶地點) and those that had been demolished. Centered on “six mazes of modernity” (六個現代性迷宮)—utopia, modern street, urban nomad, knowledge and rationality, symbol of authority, and industrial production—*Musemble City* breaks down the boundaries of the museum building and the city and problematizes historical memory. The accompanying smartphone app, called *Dream Project*, allowed the spectator to navigate the downtown core from site to site and “check in” at and gain information about each (Guo Zhaoli 2015: 9–13). This interface between the real physical urban infrastructure and the virtual world was key to the exhibition’s conceptual design. The catalog adopts Foucault’s term “heterotopia” to describe the real/virtual sites, which exist “somewhere between reality and fictional space” (9). But “dream” is the discursive core of what the curators envisioned, the goal of which was not only to retrieve “collective memories” and “collective dreams” but also for the spectator to “rediscover their dreams and subjectivity” (13). Overall, the *Musemble* exhibition was an innovative attempt to extend the boundaries of the museum into urban and virtual spaces.

The intertwining of NTM with creative capital can also be seen in the Good Time Public Arts Festival (好時光公共藝術節). Held in 2010, the festival comprised displays of public art as well as artist workshops, performances, creative collaborations, art markets, and so on. The displays were held on sites that were part of the NTM system and in other parts of the urban landscape, such as the February 28 Peace Park. Although NTM’s mandate has traditionally been anthropology and natural history, it promoted this festival as a way of increasing a sense of the interconnections among the museum, art, culture, public space, and urban development. As the curator of the festival put it, “the initiation of this art festival began with the issues of urban planning and cultural preservation under the main focus of ‘space renewal and restoration’” (GLTWBWG 2011: 9). As Emile Sheng (聖治仁), then

36. See https://www.ntm.gov.tw/en/exhibition_160_356.html. A special website has been created for the exhibition, see <http://www.musemble.org>, which has both Chinese and English versions.



Figure 0.4: Treasure Hill artists community, Taipei.

head of the Council for Cultural Affairs, emphasized, with a more political twist, the festival set out to inspire “national pride among our countrymen by raising the aesthetic standard for our living and cultural environments” (5).

There is a growing awareness around Taiwan of the importance of art to urban and economic development. An example that stands out is the Songshan Cultural and Creative Park (松山文創園區), a complex of buildings in Taipei’s Xinyi district that was once the site of the Taiwan Sotokufu Tobacco Monopoly Bureau and then the “industrial village” of a modern tobacco-processing plant. Buildings in the complex have been restored as historical architecture and now house exhibition and studio spaces, a huge Eslite Bookstore, a café, a restaurant, and the Taiwan Design Museum.³⁷ The site markets itself as the “creative hub of Taipei” (臺北市的原創基地). A different kind of example is Treasure Hill (寶藏巖), once a loose and informal artists’ village, now transformed into a city-promoted arts community, with galleries and workshops open to the public (Rogelja 2014) (see Figure 0.4). Artists still live and work in the village, which is close to the campus of Taiwan University. Although the organizers have sought to avoid displaying the private lives of artists and their families by reducing public visiting hours, the village is clearly exploiting

37. For a discussion of similar projects in Mainland China, see Keane 2012.

the hip image of artists to enhance the city's cultural aura. That museums are, or hope to be, an important part of this new creative economy is suggested by the theme of the 2019 International Museum Day: "Museums as Cultural Hubs, The Future of Tradition."

The National Museum of History is planning its own large renovation project, which I discuss in Chapter 1, that will entail an expansion of its exhibition space and a design overhaul of the Nanhai area surrounding the museum. Large-scale museums and performing arts centers are in the works throughout Taiwan. The National Palace Museum, for example, has built an immense Southern Branch, which I discuss in Chapter 10, outside of Chia-yi; it opened in 2016. The project was vigorously backed by the Nationalist government under Ma Ying-jeou. Other recently built or in-progress large-scale projects include the Kaohsiung Center for the Performing Arts, the New Taipei Museum of Art, the Taipei Performing Arts Center, and many more. Clearly, the Taiwan government places much emphasis on forging a global image of Taiwan as culturally sophisticated, design-savvy, and invested in the arts, but as June Chu (2004) argues, the role of museums in fomenting economic development may not be as effective as the politically driven rhetoric suggests.

This enhancement of cultural and creative capital in the political/economic sphere has been reflected in a change in the Taiwan government's cultural bureaucracy. In 2012, the Council for Cultural Affairs (CCA) was raised to ministerial level and renamed the Ministry of Culture. Lung Ying-tai (龍應台), a writer and scholar who had headed the CCA leading up to the change, became Taiwan's first minister of culture. Now with its own ministry, the cultural realm took on greater political and public significance than before. At the same time, the ministry's founding was an attempt to bureaucratize culture, depoliticize the state's support for it, and make it more responsive to all the various constituencies in Taiwan. The ministry website puts it this way: "The Ministry is working to create an environment in which cultural activities thrive, where our cultural heritage is preserved, and all people—regardless of background or status—are given opportunities to express themselves culturally and become more culturally refined."³⁸

Let this overview of the general development of museums and memorial spaces in Taiwan serve as historical context for appreciating the museums I discuss in the ten generically organized chapters that follow. Each chapter converges around a theme—the forging of national origins from the prehistoric past, multiculturalism and the modern multiethnic nation, historical trauma and atrocity, human rights and democracy, KMT war memory, Chiang Kai-shek's place in Taiwan history, literature as the root of national culture, aboriginal cultures and de-sinification, local identity and place-making, and Taiwan's insertion into the world—that in totality are at the core of Taiwan identity and historical memory in the post-martial law era.

38. See https://www.moc.gov.tw/en/content_84.html.