

Representing Taiwan Aborigines: Discourse Analysis on Aboriginal Objects Since the Nineteenth Century

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Abstract

Taiwan aboriginal objects lie in the museums of different areas silently, and keep a less known story about Taiwan aborigines and themselves. They left their birthplace, Taiwan aboriginal tribes no later than the 19th century, transferred among different spaces and then were displayed publicly. By tracing their social life, I want to write a biography of aboriginal objects, which are used to depict a world about others and create an arena of intertwined powers. In this complicated network, aboriginal objects obscure the opposition between things and human, ourselves and others and the West and the East. They become tools of civilizing project and footnotes colonial expansion, weapons for Chinese struggling with colonial power by decolonization and the authentic specimens for aborigines to recover traditional culture and construct self-identity.

Keywords

Taiwan aboriginal objects, museums, colonial and post-colonial discourse, decolonization

Introduction

In 2009, the “Exhibition of Taiwan Ethnic Minorities’ history & culture” was held in the Cultural Palace of Nationalities in order to introduce the fourteen aboriginal ethnic groups and aboriginal culture to the public of China mainland and promote the relationship between the both sides of the Taiwan Strait. This was the first exhibition designed by aboriginal staff in China mainland and all the collections were brought from Taiwan aiming to represent an authentic Taiwan aboriginal culture. The huge pictures of mountains with cloud illustrated geographic feature where aborigines resided by generations. And a map of geographic distribution directly showed the official identified fourteen ethnic groups locating among Taiwan Island. Going by the watchtower, visitors reached the section of history exhibiting important historical events from the Dutch Occupation Period to modern times, which highlighted the long history, the fight with colonial powers, especially Japanese colonialists, and the

Aboriginal Movement for equal political, economical and cultural rights in modern times. The sections of Aboriginal culture and life displayed various aboriginal objects to show the social organization, ritual and ceremonies, head-hunting custom, agricultural life, garments and ornaments, also, aboriginal dance was also one part of exhibition which created a harmonious atmosphere.

At first glance, these aboriginal objects cross the Taiwan Strait and became the medium of cultural communication, yet there has a complex history about aboriginal object collecting and exhibiting with multiple discourses around these silent objects. Since the 19th century, aboriginal objects have been collected by different groups. The practice of aboriginal object collecting and exhibiting writes a biography of aboriginal objects, the process of which is filled with political or scholarly powers. And the orientation of “the cultural biography of things” emphasizes the social life and value of things (Appadurai 1986), which provides an appropriate model for discussing the changing social meanings of aboriginal objects. The involvement of colonial and post-colonial power make this biography more completed. Nicholas Thomas puts objects of aboriginal Pacific societies into the colonial context and considers that the creative recontextualization and indeed reauthorship could finish by purchase or theft (Thomas 1991:5). Aboriginal objects are exchanged, purchased or appropriated, leave their birthplace, cross the ocean and then become collections in museums.

It seems that the life of aboriginal objects comes to the end, and is frozen to be fragments of indigenous culture or history, however their social life do not finish. Museums, as the last destination, have become controversial spaces with powers and continue the biography of aboriginal objects by recontextualization. Objects are gathered, classified, arranged and used to represent “Others”, which mix some motive and help to explain ourselves and others though poetic images (Honlihan 1991:211). Actually, though such material world depicts a world of others, it has been a complicated network where human and things, ourselves and others, and the West and the East entangle. Just as the statement of Nicholas Thomas, entanglement with colonizing agents promotes a distinctive indigenous historical consciousness and makes them have a new way to think about material culture (Thomas 1991:4). Exhibitions of aboriginal objects represent aborigines, mirror the images of the West and Chinese and engage in building modern nations as well as recovering aboriginal culture, reinterpreting aboriginal objects and construct self-identity.

Therefore, In this article, I put aboriginal objects in the center of research and try to examine several relationships around them, human and aboriginal objects, aboriginal and external powers, and relations between among external powers. Then raise these questions: what kinds of aboriginal object are collected and why are these collectors interested in them? How does the meaning of aboriginal objects change in different contexts? And how do these powers entangle and impose discourses on aboriginal objects? In order to answer these questions, I take some museums in different periods as examples and analyze discourses of exhibitions as texts by putting them into broader historical and social context.

Aboriginal Objects Collecting in the Nineteenth Century

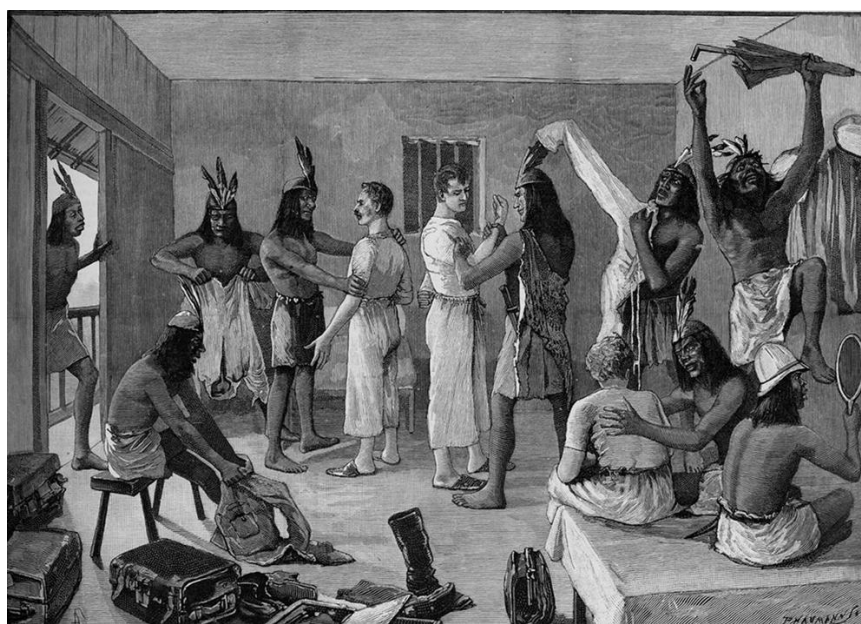
"Ilha Formosa!"

When Portuguese found this unknown island and said "Ilha Formosa", that meant she would be on the global stage. And even the term "Formosa" came along with colonial exploitation for several centuries. If Portuguese gave this island a beautiful and romantic name, then the Dutch would be the first Western settlers to develop and govern this island. The Dutch had realized the importance of this island, which connected the Europe and East Asia, and possessed rich natural resources, sugar, deerskin, raw silk and fruit, and built two forts, Zelandia and Providentia. They exploited natural resources and planed to plant cane in Formosa to supply the demand of market of Holland, Persia and Japan (Blussé *et.al* 2010:166-167). Except exploring mineral resources for trade, the Dutch introduced law and sent missionaries to Formosa. These missionaries had great success, established churches and schools, reduced the language to writing and converted the inhabitants of plain to Christianity. Until 1633, more than 200 people were baptized (Blussé *et.al* 2010:142), and four or five native converts were sent to Holland for training (Blussé *et.al* 2010:168). However, as Han people and Spanish, the Dutch paid more attention to the west coast of Formosa, and had lacking knowledge about the geography and aborigines in the eastern Formosa. In 1662, the Dutch was defeated by the military of Zheng Chenggong and the link between Formosa and western countries was cut. In the 18th century, Formosa reappeared in the eyes of the Europeans. George Psalmanazar, who claimed he was a native of Formosa and a convert to Anglican Christianity, depicted Formosa as civilized and flourishing world, and there were many details about Formosa customs, geography and political economy (Psalmanaazaar 2005). Though the book, *An Historical and Geographical Description of Formosa*, was verified that was just literary hoax, his exotic description and "adventure" still attracted and inspired Europeans to know more about the island.

In the next two centuries, colonial power of Dutch, Spain, British, America and Japan infused into Formosa. And this name has become so attractive to the "western" since the 19th century, especially after the treaty between Great Britain and China. Chinese government opened four ports of Formosa (Taiwan), Tamsui, Keelung, Taiwanfoo and Takao to foreign trade in 1860. Except the fix tariff, treaty powers could send ambassadors, formed "Maritime Customs" Service at Treaty Ports, and dispatched missionaries. For most foreigners, Formosa was divided into two "worlds" by the Central Range, and their geography knowledge about Formosa was mainly about the west part, where has great ports, fertile plain and civilized or semi-civilized inhabitants; while, the east was mountainous, wild, mysterious place and occupied by "untamed", "fierce" aborigines (Swinhoe 1863-1864, Collingwood 1868). Despite the foreigners with venturesome spirit living in Formosa desired to be acquainted with the interior of the unknown place, they were so afraid of aborigines, who were "notorious" for head-hunting customs (Kopsoh 1869-1870:7). It was also impossible for explorers to cross the border into the aboriginal territory without assistants.

At that time, most adventure activities were small-scaled and tentative. But the situation changed in the next few years. It seemed that some aboriginal tribes were more tolerant to the approach of strangers, and even accustomed to casual visits of Europeans (Hughes 1871-1872:265). Some explore teams could be deep into the aboriginal tribes and established friendly relationship with them. There were some famous explorers in the 19th century, such as Joseph B. Steere, William A. Pickering, Cuthbert Collingwood, Robert Swinhoe, John Dodd, George Taylor, J. Thomson, William Campbell and George Mackay, etc. They were officials, merchants, naturalists, anthropologists or missionaries, who crossed the border with different goals, and played essential roles in investigating aboriginal tribes and collecting aboriginal objects.

For most explorers, the first mission to travel among mountains and aboriginal tribes was to investigate the geographic situation of the east of Formosa to find natural resources and available ports for trade. Comparing with the western part, the eastern part had more quality coal, rice, sugar, jute, grass-cloth fibre, rice paper, wheat, camphor, petroleum, dyewood, and tea. However, there were no more available and better ports except Takow and Tamsui. Another limitation for considerable commerce was that it was difficult to send cargoes direct from Europe or America to Formosa (Swinhoe 1863-1864:28).



Aborigines encountered the Westerners, from Formosa: Nineteenth Century Image. The picture is sketched by Mr. Edmund Hornby Grimani and illustrated in *London News* Vol. 96, No. 2656 (15 March 1890):333.

Some other foreigners aimed to collect natural specimens with the support of academic institutions, such as Royal Geographic Society of London, Ethnological Society of London, National Geographic Society, British Museum or Michigan

University. Robert Swinhoe, who was the consul of Takow and also the collector of specimens of plant and animal, traveled through the island of Formosa to enrich his "Formosa list" and made a fair collection for British Museum (Swinhoe 1865-1866:123). He donated some specimens to Zoological Gardens, London and introduced the species in Formosa to the English public and the members of Royal Geographic Society of London and Ethnological Society of London (Swinhoe 1865-1866, Fix and Lo 2006:14). The missionary, William Campbell also collected some natural specimens in the central Formosa, which preserved in British Museum. And Joseph Steere collected materials of natural history for Michigan University from 1873 to 1874 (Steere 2009: xxii).

The aboriginal tribes and their customs fascinated and attracted these explorers. During exploration and doing missionary work, they made some ethnological or anthropological investigations, recorded life and culture of aborigines, and collected aboriginal objects. William A. Pickering expressed his excitement and joy when he saw aborigines, and said that "the mountaineers seem walk out of the novel of Marryat or Fenimore Cooper", and "I have accomplished the wish of my heart" (Pickering 1994:113). In most cases, explorers started from Takow (Kaohsiung), Tamsui, Keelung or Taiwanfoo (Tainan), reached the border to hire plain people, Han or Pepos (Pingpu) people as guide and translator, and then penetrated into the interior southward or northward. They also needed to bring gifts to please aborigines before they started, such as rug, colorful bead, red cloth, mirror, flint or needle, and then bartered for the objects they were interested with. For instance, Swinhoe in Kweiyings, Campbell in Po-li-sia and Steere in north area, all of them obtained aboriginal objects by exchange.

Sometimes, the exchange was not equal between foreigners and aborigines. Swinhoe gave his silk belt to an aboriginal girl as gift when he was in Kweiyings, and in return, this girl gave him a cotton one. But he was laughed by other people, because the cotton belt was not such valuable as his (Chen 2008:67). Through gift-giving, explorers established well relationship with aborigines, created chances to revisit here, and also could continue to visit other aboriginal tribes by introduction. However, collectors couldn't get whatever they want, especially the objects with special meaning, even though they provided more valuable things. Steere with his guide Atun visited aboriginal tribes in 1873. He found the red bag for head hang behind the door, which was highly ornamented with beads and Chinese hair, and he immediately realized that would be worthy for collecting. Unfortunately, he couldn't get that bag no matter how many beads or red cloth he provided. What he bought were some aboriginal clothes and musical instruments (Steere 2009:83-84). Pickering also encountered such embarrassment. He found some aboriginal tribes had 'taboo'. "I want to exchange an elaborate tobacco pipe or belt, but they say that is 'Hiang', which means the object is 'taboo' and can not give others" (Pickering 1994:155).

Missionaries, another group of collectors, played essential roles in collecting practice. They came to Formosa from different denominations and countries, tried to convert aboriginal customs to their belief, and also collected natural specimens and aboriginal objects in mission fields. Before the Japanese occupation period, the

Dominican and Presbyterian had spread to Formosa, particularly the latter influenced aboriginal society and their belief. London Missionary Society sent Dr. James Laidlaw Maxwell to Formosa, who was the first British missionary in this island and put the South Formosa into mission field in 1865 (Wu 2006:110). Then Rev. Hugh Ritchie, Dr. Matthew Dickson, Rev. William Campbell, Rev. Thomas Barclay, George Ede, came to preach the gospel and depicted the 'sketches of Formosa' in their notes. In contrast with the former, Canadian missionaries did their mission work in the North Formosa. Rev. George Leslie Mackay worked in Formosa from 1872 to 1901, and an excellent collector, whose collection included natural specimens and rich aboriginal objects. Unlike other collectors, missionaries established well friendship with aborigines and gained their respect though medical practice. They took their medical instruments along with them when they traveled among plain and mountains. They exchanged objects with aborigines; and at the same time, aborigines were glad to give some objects to missionaries as gift for appreciating their help.

These aboriginal objects were collected and conveyed by junks to Keelung, Takow (Kaohsiung) or Taiwanfoo (Tainan), and then shipped to explorers' own countries. Joseph B. Steere, lived in Penghu Islands for several weeks in 1874, collected near half a ton of coral, two or three bushels of shell and the hundreds of species of fish, and conveyed them by tea ship to New York (Steere 2009:106-108). Rev. George Mackay returned Canada with his collection in 1893 (Huang and Chen 2011), and donated them to Knox College Museum. His collections included natural specimens, objects of Han and aborigines, which were more than 600 items. Nowadays, these collections were preserved in Department of Anthropology, Department of Near Eastern & Asian Civilizations, Textiles and Costume Section, and Far Eastern Section of Royal Ontario Museum and University Health Network (Hu 2001:66-76).

Aboriginal Objects Collecting Practice under Japanese Colonial Discourses

Qing government defeated in the Sino-Japanese War in 1895 and signed the Treaty of Shimonoseki, in which the Liaodong Peninsula, Taiwan and the Penghu Islands were ceded to Japan. Indeed, Japanese government had fully realized the economic, military and political value of the east part of Taiwan before the war. Kabayama Sukenori, who was the admiral in the Imperial Japanese Navy and the first Japanese Governor-General of Taiwan, made policies to suppress Chinese resistance in plain areas to stabilize Japan's rule over Taiwan (Police Bureau of Taiwan Governor-General 1997:2). Meanwhile, Japanese authority viewed civilizing aborigines and exploiting the east mountain as essential part of affairs, and established special department, Fuken Shu (Aboriginal Affair Bureau), to guide production and aboriginal objects exchange.

With Japanese colonial expansion, aboriginal object collecting tended to more highly systematic and organized. Unlike western collecting activities, administrative and academic power interweaved with each other and involved the practice of collecting from official and folk level. And all the collections were used to serve

colonial control and management. Earlier aboriginal investigations by Fuken Shu (Aboriginal Affairs Bureau) aimed to understand the geography, climate, population, custom and indigenous products, and gained the trust from aborigines. They also made their efforts to change ideas and belief of aborigines, prohibiting head-hunting, and then achieved the goal that “instruct aborigines to engage in production, improve life condition and enlighten their mind” (Ibid.:21, 25). The investigation contents referred to every aspect of aboriginal life and culture, among which was to “collect natural resources and aboriginal specimens” and “preserve in Taiwan Governor-General Office for reference, and investigate aboriginal custom for conviction” (Ibid.:46). Specimens needed to be collected included: 1) cloth and ornaments, 2) food and dietetic vessel, 3) house and configuration of other building, 4) furniture, 5) farm tools, loom and accessory, 6) weapon, 7) ritual materials, 8) musical instrument and toy, 9) agricultural products, animal, plant and mineral (Ibid.).

Additionally, the subordinate agency of Fuken Shu, Huanfan Suo (Station of Aboriginal Products Exchange) was established for encouraging aborigines to exchange products under official control. On the one hand, Huanfan Suo provided needle, cotton thread, hoe or pig as gift (Wang 2003:686) to attract aborigines to exchange. The products aborigines brought were clothes, agricultural products and animals and they were used to exchange life necessities, such as rice, salt, and tools, beads, red-cloth, cotton thread, Han clothes, and coins etc (Ibid.:71-72, 133-146). On the other hand, authority desired to change “bad habit” of aborigines by giving and limiting supplies, then train them to be civilized people. They awarded tamed aborigines by giving objects and punished untamed aborigines by limiting or cutting supplying necessities. In this way, Japanese government collected a considerable amount of objects.

At the same time, Japanese intellectuals found Taiwan Fanqing Yanjiuhui (Society of Taiwan Aborigine), which was supported by the government and conducted a series of bottom-up investigations in aboriginal areas. They considered “the east is the treasury, and reveal the truth of Taiwan”, and this institution would give a hand to “obtain the ‘treasure’” (Police Bureau of Taiwan Governor-General 1997:73). It was undoubted that the investigation and collections became the guide of colonial exploitation, though the establishment of institution symbolized a new page of academic field.

In the Japanese colonial context, administrative and academic power intertwined and effected on the practice of investigation and aboriginal object collecting. The typical case is the Temporary Investigation Institution of Taiwan Customs founded in 1901, which was one section of Taiwan Governor-General Office and possessed organized structure, sufficient financial and intelligent support. This institution was an administrative organization as well as academic institution, where attracted juristic and economic scholars from Tokyo Imperial University, Hosei University and other universities. The initial goal was to investigate and research the customs and rules in colonies and then made laws. Until 1909, Fanzu Ke (Department of Aborigine) was established and led by anthropologists, such as Ino Kanori and Mori Ushinosuke.

Ino Kanori came to Taiwan in 1895 and organized Society of Taiwan

Anthropology with Yasusada Tashiro. They traveled among aboriginal tribes to investigate and collect natural and anthropological specimens (Ino 1996:8, 49). He took his aboriginal collections back to Japan in 1908 and built Taiwan Guan (Museum of Taiwan) for exhibiting documents, folk materials and aboriginal objects (Library of National Taiwan University 1998:46). There were more than 300 items of his collections, including aboriginal garments, ornaments, wooden utensil, pottery, carved house plank, ancestral effigy, musical instruments, weapon, ritual objects and some Han objects were transferred to Taipei Imperial University in 1934, and preserved in the exhibiting room of ethnology office for research (Hu and Cui 1998:5).



Aboriginal objects in the Museum of Taiwan Governor-General, Latest album of Taiwan, 1931, from GIS Database of National Library.

Another Japanese collector was Mori Ushinosuke, who came to Taiwan in 1895 and was called a pioneer of aboriginal investigation. He traveled throughout the island, visited aboriginal tribes and collected anthropological, historical, ethnological, geographical and botanic materials. He participated in investigating geography, forest and Atayal tribes with explorer team in 1907. The exploration aimed to collect specimens for opening the museum of Taiwan Governor-General. Actually, Mori Ushinosuke had penetrated into the mountains for collecting botanic and aboriginal specimens several times (Mori 2000:506). And he donated his collections to the museum when it was established. It was not clear that how many specimens Mori collected. But according to the record of museum, there were total 12,723 collections, including 906 geographical and mineral specimens, 3,998 botanic specimens, 3,722 animal specimens, 712 ethnological specimens, 100 historical and educational specimens, 1,811 agricultural specimens, 455 forestry specimens, 179 aquatic products, 152 artifacts and 316 commercial specimens (Li 1999:280). Among that the

botanic and aboriginal specimens in the museum were almost Mori Ushinosuke's own collection (Mori 2000:36). Under the political power, these private collections transform their role to the collections in the museum opening to the public.

Cross Taiwan Strait: Chinese Scholars and Aboriginal Objects Collecting

Since Japanese occupation period, Taiwan anthropological researches and aboriginal investigations were nearly monopolized by Japanese institutions. And the link between the two sides of Taiwan Strait was cut by Japanese colonial military, political and academic powers. Some Chinese intellectuals deeply felt that the public of China Mainland knew little about Taiwan aborigines even the situation of this island that motivated them to go to Taiwan for anthropological investigations. However, the different ideology between Chinese Communist Party and Kuomintang not only imposed on the political and social structure, but also shaped the meaning of aboriginal objects and the ways they interpreted them.

The Chinese anthropologist Lin Huixiang, who was the pioneer of aboriginal investigation, crossed the Strait and traveled among aboriginal tribes in the late 1920s. Because of the dangerous situation, he couldn't do long-term deep investigations, but he provided the first-hand observation and materials to Chinese scholars. His book *Fanzu Yuanshi Wenhua* (Primitive Culture of Taiwan Aborigines) was published and became the window for Chinese scholars to understand the culture and society of aborigines. He started from Xiamen to Taipei, traveled along the west line to Jiabanshan, and then Su'ao to investigate and collect specimens. With the help of Chinese local officers, he bought objects from aborigines of Melan, Xingang, Toa Mabakut, Tipun and Derangguan tribes. In the investigation, he collected 221 collections, including aboriginal garments, ornaments, weapon, wooden artifacts, ritual objects and boats (Lin 1991), which were preserved and exhibited in the Museum of Anthropology of Xiamen University.

After Taiwan's recovery, Chinese scholars could go to Taiwan for more investigations. Jin Zutong was one of them, who felt that it was time for Chinese scholars to research on aborigines and there were still no Japanese researches about aboriginal artifacts. So in 1946, he went to Taiwan under the support of Ding Huikang, a famous collector, when Japan capitulated and Japanese military evacuated from Taiwan. He bought some artifacts from Japanese. During two and a half years, he traveled between Hualien port and mountains several times and then returned to Taipei. He collected various aboriginal objects, which were classified into: 1) weapon, such as bow, arrow, shield, spear, dagger and knife; 2) articles for daily use and production, including pottery, rattan and bamboo articles, plate, cup, comb; 3) aboriginal garments; 4) artifacts, such as wooden effigy, carved wooden board, screen; 5) ritual objects (Jin 1948). He took these collections back to the China mainland and hold exhibition about Taiwan aborigines in Shanghai and Hangzhou to the public (Jin 1949). These aboriginal objects Jin Zutong collected were donated to Tsinghua University for supporting the establishment of Art History Department.

Responding to scholars in China mainland, Taiwan scholars did series of

aboriginal investigations in the 1950s, especially after the foundation of Institution of Ethnology, Academia Sinica and re-organization of National Taiwan University. On the one hand, Taiwan scholars inherited and assimilated the research achievements and materials Japanese scholars left. On the other hand, they tried to re-establish the chronology of Taiwan culture, and understand the social change since the Japanese occupation period. For example, Institution of Ethnology organized investigation teams to Paiwan, Atayal and other aboriginal tribes. Anthropologists and ethnologists gain the first hand materials and collected various ethnological specimens. Basing on these collected objects, Ethnology Collection Room was established.

Actually, the collecting practice of Chinese scholars was the response to Japanese colonial power, and the discourses of western centralism about Chinese art. Through exhibiting and introducing Taiwan culture and aboriginal customs, Chinese intellectuals tried to evoke Chinese national consciousness and expressed that Taiwan was one part of China. Aboriginal objects were placed into the Chinese multiethnic system. In this respect, aboriginal objects were regarded as ethnic relics as objects of other nationalities. Additionally, this classification was also the challenge of western aesthetics of Chinese art. By the second half of the 20th century, Chinese ceramic, bronze, jade, stone statue and Chinese painting had well known in the West, which were considered as Chinese art. Pioneering researches of Stephen Wootton Bushell made more western collectors turn to Chinese and Japanese antique (Yetts 1929). And there were a series of exhibitions in the 20th century, such as exhibitions of Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Burlington Fine Art Club (Brock 1915), and Mills College (Salmony 1934) and so on. In such situation, some Chinese scholars, Liang Sicheng, Feng Youlan and Chen Mengjia, resided in America felt the loss of Chinese relics and the blank of Chinese art research. They devoted to establishing discipline of Chinese Art History when they returned to China and aimed to advocate “the responsibility of developing Chinese culture” (Chen 1948). Except bronze, ceramics, jade artifacts, their category of collections also included archaeological specimens, such as stone and bone objects, and ethnic objects, including objects of nationalities in southwest, Mongolia and Tibet and Taiwan aboriginal tribes (Archives of Tsinghua University 1948: 1-4:2-083).

In this way, the Chinese scholars questioned and challenged the western discourses. However, their motive influenced the practice of collecting and shaped the meaning of aboriginal objects, and academic discourse was imposed on the aboriginal objects, which became the epitome of Taiwan aboriginal culture and society. And most museums, no matter in China mainland or Taiwan labeled “ethnic relics” on aboriginal objects. An exceptional case was the Shanghai Museum, which exhibited these objects in Chinese Minority Nationalities’ Art Gallery. This section classified collections basing on materials and making techniques, but not ethnic groups or nationalities. Such classification inherited the category of Chinese art in the first half of the 20th century, reduces effects of political discourse and ideology, and views aboriginal objects as artifacts with aesthetic value. Therefore, aboriginal objects possessed dual roles as ethnic relics and artifacts in the post-colonial context.

Gaze on “Others”: Multiple Representations of Aboriginal Objects

The knowledge of collectors decides the collecting practices, the way they understand and interpret meanings of these objects. When put aboriginal objects into the dimension of history, it's not difficult to find that their meanings transferred from one context to another. They construct the image of aborigines and also mirror the entangled relationship between the East and the West as well as “Other” and “Self”. In this and the next section, I will do some text analysis around some museums and exhibitions to explore how aboriginal objects were given multiple images by contextualization and re-contextualization.

Undoubtly Taiwan aborigines and their objects were curious, mysterious and attractive to western people, whereas from another aspect, the practices of aboriginal object collecting were scientific and scholarly. Most collectors who were “connoisseurs” with academic background, served some academic institutions, and selected “valuable” specimens basing on their knowledge. With a universal worldview, their “Formosa list” was just one part of the list of the nature and global culture. The Formosan collections basically classified into natural and ethnographic specimens, which constituted the entire knowledge of the world.

There were several famous collectors devoted to finding new species in Formosa and improving the framework of natural history, such as Robert Swinhoe, Joseph Steere and George Mackay, etc. Take Swinhoe as example, his visit to Formosa and collecting practice was considered as ground-breaking, and his report was described as the first accurate and serious one in a Western language in the 19th century. His first collections were given to John Gould, who was ecstatic with these specimens, because there were some totally new to science (Collar 2004:51). And Gould wrote “This exceedingly beautiful species is one of the most remarkable novelties I have had the good fortune to describe” in the letter (Ibid.). Swinhoe returned to England in 1862, and set up a “Formosan Booth” at the London Exhibition to introduce Formosan species and culture (Ibid.).

Similarly, missionaries engaged in the practice of scientific collecting except doing missionary work. George Mackay would be the typical one, who was honored for his industriousness and devoted spirit. He collected various specimens, especially aboriginal objects during more than twenty years, and also played a role of natural historian as some other western collectors. Mackay fully realized the importance of Taiwan natural history, and he often took tools, geological hammer and lens, with him when he traveled and established churches, and categorized Formosan animal species into Mammalia, Birds, Reptilia, Fishes, Insects and Mollusca (Mackay 1895), which was influenced by the Linnaeus System of Classification. Meanwhile, he investigated and recorded the geographic, mineral and botanic distributions. He believed that former records about Formosa were unconvinced, and what should be emphasized were these specimens.

In the eyes of Mackay, Formosan natural history should also refer to ethnographic specimens. These objects collected by Mackay reflected his knowledge about Formosan inhabitants, and conversely, such knowledge decided his collecting

practice. He gained knowledge about Formosan aborigines from Chinese, and considered that there two main types of Formosan inhabitants: Chinese and aborigines, and the latter had four sub-types Pe-po-hoan (barbarians of the plain), Lam-si-hoan (barbarians of the south), Chhi-hoan (raw barbarians) and Sek-hoan (ripe barbarians) (Ibid.:93). What Mackay collected covered all these aspects as much as possible and was preserved and displayed in the museum of Oxford College, Tamsui, where he trained native for Christian service.

Therefore, Mackay's collecting practice tried to sketch the situation of Formosa, but also bear the duty to spread the Gospel. His western curriculum had biblical doctrines of God, Biblical history, zoology, botany, and mineralogy of Bible times and of course the modern science (Ibid.:294). There were various collections in his museum, such as books, maps, globes, microscopes, telescope, kaleidoscope, stereoscope, camera, physical and chemical apparatus, and innumerable natural specimens (Ibid.:289), which were used for teaching, because he thought a qualified priest need to have the knowledge about climate, language, and social life of the people. The most impressive collections were his ethnographic specimens of Chinese, Pe-po-hoan, and other aborigines. There were many idols, musical instruments, priests' garments, models of implements of agriculture, weapon and other aboriginal objects representing every aspect of their life. The selection of objects and the way of display fully revealed his motives and strategies of exhibition.

Keeping watch and ward over the whole scene are four life-size figures representing four sides of life in Formosa. In one corner is a Tauist priest, ... In the next corner is a bare-pated Buddhist priest, ... Opposite to him is a fierce-looking head-hunter from the mountains, his forehead and chin tattooed, his spread at his side, bows and arrows strapped across his shoulders, a long knife at his girdle, and his left hand clutching the cue of some unfortunate victim. In the fourth corner is a savage woman, rudely attired, and working with her "spinning-jenny", as they may be seen in their mountain home. (Ibid.)

The whole scene represents two distinct images, Chinese and aborigines and highlights the religious situation in Formosa. Taoism and Buddhism have deep roots in civilized Chinese society, but Chinese "superstitiously" religious life is so hard to shake by Christianity. From another side, aboriginal objects are not aesthetic at all, but "gruesome", "repulsive" and "rude", which reflect untamed, crude image of aborigines. Mackay expresses his antipathy and sympathy by displaying barbaric aborigines and their life. In his opinion, it's necessary "to evangelize the people, to enlighten their darkness by the power of divine truth, and to drive back the mists of error and the black clouds of sin that have through all the past obscured their vision of the City of God" (Ibid.:285). At the same time, he uses this strategy to train natives to identify their duty and obstacles in missionary work they need conquer.

Then turn our attention to another colonial country—Japan that gradually got rid of unequal treaties since the Meiji Restoration and became the only non-Western colonial empire in the 1990s. Mark R. Peattie considers Japan is an anomaly case that strives to follow the steps of western countries, especially western organizational models and advanced technology, to stand on the apogee of the "new imperialism"

(Peattie 1994:6). In this process of modernization and colonialism, Japan successfully transferred its role to a colonial country, and began to watch other oriental countries in an “occidental” perspective. Here, the questions I may put forward are that whether Japan is still a traditional oriental country, and how Japan strengthens its status of colonial country by exhibiting Taiwan, which is the first Japanese transoceanic colony, Taiwan aborigines and their objects.

Except propelling political and technology reform, Japan had been active in participating and holding expositions since the late 19th century. In post-colonial discourses, the world’s fair in the colonial period filled with power and colonial narrative, where Japan was once exhibited as “others”, and the Japanese artifacts even became fashionable in western countries (Quoted in Lu 2005:77). Shunya Yoshimi discusses the reconstruction of imperialism and colonialism in Japanese expositions in a critical perspective of politics (Shunya 2010). Both Shunya Yoshimi and Lu Shaoli refer to that Japan gained their experiences from participating world expositions, reproduced the model of western expositions and transplanted them to Japan (Shunya 2010, Lu 2005). At the same time, Japan began to realize that expositions had become the arena for competing technology and civilization level. In 1900, Japan participated in Exposition Universelle in London, and considered holding exposition could exhibit products and artifacts from countries around the world, understand the technology and civilization and then learn other’s strong points (Proceeding of Taiwan Association 1900:410). Taiwan aborigines and aboriginal objects were placed in the Japan Pavilion (Hu 2004:7) and displayed and put under the gaze of western countries for the first time in this exposition. The exhibition aimed to introduce the new Japanese colony — Taiwan, such as the geographical situation, natural resources and ethnic groups. In this way, Japan established its image of powerful imperial country like other western countries, and distinguished itself from other Asian countries.



The exhibition of aboriginal life in the 40th Anniversary of the Ruling Expo, Album of Taiwan exposition for the 40th Anniversary of the Ruling, 1936, from GIS Database of National Library.

On the other hand, Japan introduced exposition into Japanese mainland and even Taiwan, and there were various Japanese industrial expositions held. Most expositions displayed Japanese and Taiwan products to attract more investments in Taiwan and stimulate Japanese economy (Proceeding of Taiwan Association 1902:529). Meanwhile, there were still some other expositions established special Taiwan pavilion to introduce Taiwan and aborigines, including products, artifacts and customs to Japanese public (Ibid.:558), and show achievements in ruling and exploiting. The Japanese industrial exposition in Osaka in 1903 even transplanted the experience of displaying “backward nations” and divided the exhibition into six sub-subjects: “Emishi Tribes”, “Modern Japanese Races”, “Ryukyuan Tribes”, “Taiwan Aboriginal Tribes”, “Ancient Japanese Races” and “People in the Stone Age” (Hu 1998:52). In this narrative, an imperial landscape was sketched and “uncivilized” Taiwan aborigines and other indigenous people were illustrated by “scientific” anthropological evidences, map of ethnic distribution, demographics, biological specificities, models of house and aborigines (Proceeding of Taiwan Association 1902:545) to intensify such image.

In another case, the 40th Anniversary of the Ruling Expo in Taipei, we could see a more explicit intention. The section of aborigines has three parts: “Aboriginal Governing in the Past” exhibiting landscape in mountainous areas, Detaining Line and facilities along the Detaining Line, watchtower, blockhouse, fence, wire netting and house for police; “The Life of Aborigines” showing various aboriginal objects, garment, ornament, agricultural instrument, weapon, carving artifact, and divining object as well as six life-size aboriginal models; and “Aboriginal Governing in the Present” depicting the new look of mountainous areas, including the models of trading post, fruit orchards, shrine and new bridge. (Hu 2004:16) It seems obvious that exhibition desires to evoke the public to realize the difficulties in exploiting and ruling colony and the “unenlightened” images arouse their pathetic and sympathetic feelings. Therefore, the strategy of exhibition legitimates Japanese colonialism and admits that Japan burdens the mission to advance education and help aborigines to enter the civilized society.

No matter the western colonial countries or their successor, Japan examines Taiwan aborigines as uncivilized people and who need to be rescued by changing their corrupt customs and converting their beliefs to Christianity. And for western explorers and the pathbreakers of Japanese colonial career, aboriginal objects are their trophies for conquering such wild mountainous areas and untamed, intractable aborigines. Moreover, these objects are brought into the knowledge system about the world or evidences of the extension of imperial territory. The museums and expositions collecting numerous curios or exotic objects just like a kaleidoscope of strange sights and impressions. It is obvious that anthropologists turn their anthropological gaze upon aborigines and aboriginal objects as “others”, and they also active in constructing academic and political discourse.

An Uneasy Bridge between Taiwan and China Mainland

Under the post-colonialist context, Chinese scholars attempted to decolonize and deconstruct the representations that Japanese power imposed on Taiwan. However, because of the different ideologies of Taiwan and China mainland since 1949, there were two distinct strategies to reestablish the meanings of aboriginal objects, which served different political purposes and formed two systems of discourse. Here, I will explore that how the roles of aboriginal objects have changed to be a bridge between the two sides of Taiwan Strait.

For the scholars between the Strait, they had a common mission that was to break the Japanese colonial myth by numerous academic activities, though the 1949 was the water shed for the two incompatible ideologies and then intellectual powers were reorganized. In Taiwan, the first ethnological institution, Institution of Ethnology, was established, which was completely led by Chinese after Taiwan's recovery. And the scholars from Institution of Ethnology and Taiwan University did series of aboriginal researches since the 1950s. The investigations referred to the main ethnic groups, Atayal, Rukai, Paiwan, Puyuma, Ami, Yami¹, Saisiat, Thao and Bunun². During this time, Taiwan scholars collected the first-hand materials and aboriginal objects, which added to previous Japanese materials and were useful for researchers to observe the social change of aboriginal communities.

Just like the statement above, Taiwan aborigines and aboriginal culture were both placed in the Japanese culture, and Taiwan was belong to Japanese imperial power and the footnote of empire. Scholars tried to decode such colonial codes by archaeological, ethnological and linguistic evidences. Firstly, archaeologists initiated numerous field investigations and excavations covering the whole island. Though several Japanese researchers excavated some sites in Taiwan, they just collected some archaeological materials without deep analysis. Chinese scholars took over Taipei Imperial University and changed its name to National Taiwan University in 1949, and at the same time, they established the Department of Archaeological Anthropology. Archaeologists found and excavated many prehistoric sites, such as Puyuma, Tapenkeng, Kenting, Kagou and Yuanshan, etc (Zang 1998). The prehistoric findings revealed that “ancient people resided in the Taiwan Straits area since Pleistocene” (Chang 1999:157). Meanwhile, the continuity of earth layers reflected the fact that Taiwan culture had its cultural origin but not from Japan, and the culture developed contiguously. Moreover, evidences from typological analysis showed there were some similar archaeological characteristics between the area of southeast coast of China and Taiwan, where was the northernmost part of the distribution of Austronesian. This conclusion was supported by ethnological and linguistic evidences from extant aboriginal communities, and forcefully challenged the chronological sequence by Japanese academic discourse.

The new cultural chronology affected the display of aboriginal objects in Taiwan museums. Take the National Museum of Prehistory, Taiwan, as example, basing on the archaeological excavation in Puyuma relics, this museum was established in the 1980s, where exhibited three main subjects, “Natural History of Taiwan”, “Prehistory

of Taiwan” and “The Austronesians of Taiwan”. Obviously, the design of exhibitions followed archaeological chronology and linguistic evidences. The origin of Taiwan and human activities traced to the nature and prehistory, where people could find their ancestor. The former decided the geography and natural landscape, where would be the homeland for generations; the latter implied that its 15,000 year history, from the Upper Paleolithic, Neolithic age to Iron Age was long and continuous. And the exhibition emphasized the interactions between ancient people and natural environment which created different and various cultures.

It seems like a journey though time that visitors travel from the far past to the present. Then what they see would be the third section, “The Austronesians of Taiwan”. The section puts aboriginal culture into the system of Austronesian and tries to display multiple ethnic cultures in Taiwan. The museum chooses one subject from each group to represents typical aspect of aboriginal culture by objects display. For instance, Atayal objects, especially the garments are used to show the multiple culture and interaction with other ethnic groups; building culture, including the slate house and Paiwan carving is viewed as the typical elements of Paiwan culture; the subject of Ami display is kinship and labor division between men and women, who control their respective tools, hunting equipments of men and tools of pottery-making of women. All these subjects highlight the main topic — — social relationship among groups. Another topic in the exhibition is artifacts, livelihood and society, such as the marine culture of Yami or Tau represented with their boats and fishing and shipbuilding technique. Additionally, the ritual objects of Saisiat and Bunun show the ritual and ideas of spirits.

In fact, Taiwan aborigines are gradually absorbed into the camp to fight against Japanese colonial power, and aboriginal culture is brought into the main discourse in the post-colonial context. To some degree, the display of aboriginal object is a strategy to reveal that Taiwanese is not just the Chinese, but also aborigines, both of which are integrated into the national discourse and compose a multicultural Taiwan. Meanwhile, another facet of this strategy is that aboriginal objects and cultures, actually, could reflect cultural ties with the past better than Chinese, who mainly emigrated from the China mainland. From this point of view, the representation of aboriginal objects and culture aims to emphasize Taiwan as a unity with multiple cultures and the relationship with Austronesian, and cut the tie with Japan, even the China mainland to some extent.

Then, we can see a complete different image from another side of the Taiwan Strait. The aboriginal objects were regarded as a bridge between China mainland and Taiwan, and specimens for public education. Similar with some Taiwan researchers, researchers in China mainland tried to explore the national origin through historic literature, archaeological findings, ethnological and linguistic evidences. Yet, these researchers also focused on the relationship between the China mainland, especially the southeast coast of China and Taiwan.

Lin Huixiang, the pioneer of collecting aboriginal objects in China mainland and the first curator of the Museum of Anthropology of Xiamen University, dedicated himself to Chinese anthropology and history of Chinese nationalities, especially

exploring the relationship between “Bai Yue” and Austronesian. He agreed that Taiwan aborigines belong to the Malays (Lin 1990:58), but he also considered there was cultural relation between the two sides of Taiwan Strait. Basing on the analysis of Neolithic archaeological materials and physical anthropological characteristics, he concluded that the origin of Taiwan aborigines should be multiple, and the descendants of “Bai Yue” in southeast coast of China and Ancient Austronesian people (Lin 1981:197-199, 301). Therefore as Lin Huixiang advocated, the Museum of Anthropology of Xiamen University gathered archaeological, ethnological, and historical collections aiming at exhibiting Austronesian culture and history of “Bai Yue”. In such academic discourse, the aboriginal objects were placed into the “Bai Yue-Austronesian” system to illustrate the internal cultural relationship among Taiwan, China mainland and Austronesia. The museum also became the window facing to Taiwan.

Chinese government organized scholarly teams to do ethnological, historic and linguistic investigations in ethnic minority areas for identifying nationalities since 1950. The concept of “nation” and the standards of identification accepted the definition of Stalin and Russian national policies in part. Investigators collected ethnological materials, language, social structure, economic life, folk customs, religion, etc, as well as national objects. At the same time, nationalities were distinguished by their cultural diversities, and until the 1980s, there were 55 minority nationalities officially identified. Taiwan Gaoshan nationality was identified by Chinese government in the 1950s; nevertheless, researchers did not go to Taiwan for investigation because of the isolation between the two sides, but mainly refer to the ethnography of Lin Huixiang, who divided Gaoshan nationalities into seven groups (Institution of Ethnology of Chinese Academic of Science 1963).

Exhibitions in the museums of ethnology convey the discourse of ideology and Chinese national policy directly, the ethnic relics in which depict a harmonious and united country. The Museum of Ethnic Culture of Minzu University of China would be the typical case, which owns a big collection of 56 nationalities, including rich aboriginal objects. The basic function of these collections is for professional teaching, until 1988, they open to the public for displaying multiple ethnic cultures.

When visitors enter the museum, they could see a big painting of 56 nationalities and a map of geographic distribution of Chinese nationalities. And the museum chooses garments and ornaments as main subjects, which are characteristics to distinguish the differences among minority nationalities, such as the type, design, texture, color, and making technique. And the basic classification of collection basing on geographic distribution of nationalities mainly includes the Northern and Southern ethnic groups. In the southern ethnic group section, shell-bead cloth is chosen as best-represented and top level making technique in aboriginal garments. Therefore, aboriginal culture is concentrated some kind of technique, and one member of the “family of nationalities” like other minority nationalities.

However there is also another special exhibition about Taiwan aboriginal material culture in the museum, where display the garments, ornaments, wood carving, rattan work, pottery, and weapons. The identified collections are categorized and

arrayed according to different groups, also, some other unidentified objects, such as ornaments were assembled in other showcase and just labeled the Chinese-English name and entry date. In fact, the material world aboriginal objects create become the epitome of aboriginal culture and society. We also could see that exhibition change and adjust along with academic shift. With the academic dispute about the concept of “nation”, “nationality” and “ethnic group”, museum tries to de-politicize by changing using the term “nationality” to “ethnic group”. Meanwhile, since the 1980s Taiwan aborigines launched the movements to call for changing the name “Gaoshan” to “Aborigines” to eliminate discrimination and achieve equality. Museums of ethnology in China mainland use the name “aborigine” to respond to aboriginal movement.

Actually, aboriginal objects have become the bridge between China mainland and Taiwan nowadays due to a thaw in cross-Strait relations and frequent academic activities. More aboriginal visiting missions come and visit museums preserving and exhibiting aboriginal objects, some of which have never been seen in some aboriginal tribes. These aboriginal objects collected in the past possess authenticity and symbolize the traditional technique lost in aboriginal society. However, have to admit that museums in China main and Taiwan consciously or unconsciously tend to essentialize aboriginal cultures by special material or technique. For instance, wood carving technique of Paiwan or weaving technique of Atayal could generalize their whole culture. And museums create a microcosm of Taiwan panorama or Chinese national cultural landscape.

Voice of the Voiceless: Rediscover Aboriginal Objects

It seems that the voices of aborigines are completely overwhelmed by external powers, which struggle and entangled with each other in the arena aboriginal objects make. Political and scholarly discourses impose on aboriginal objects, create and recreate different images of Taiwan aborigines and their objects. As I have mentioned that indigenous knowledges decided the way western explorers collect aboriginal objects, because these collectors have to follow the customs, respect the taboo and gain their trust, if they want to get collections. I consider that this is some kind of strategy aborigines take when they encounter the unknown western people.

Such situation, though, completely changed in the Japanese occupation period. Japanese government took various measures to transform aboriginal tribes to be civilized society though promoting economic exchange and forbidding personal exchange, trying to convert aborigines to be Christian, training native polices to assist governing and change their life customs. Aborigines obtained necessities by exchange in Huanfan Suo (Station of Aboriginal Products Exchange), where also provided many modern products. In the inventory of 1922, the objects aborigines exchange were totally different from the past, for example, straw mat, quilt, blankets, bamboo leaf hat, umbrella, lamp, cup, bowl, chopsticks, soap, bucket, Tabi socks (Japanese-style socks), puttee, sugar, soy sauce, Miso, milk, and cosmetic (Chen 1997:899). These civilized projects hugely impact aboriginal tribes and their life and also lead the loss of traditional techniques and the number of aboriginal objects

decreasing as well. Japanese government supported indigenous technique, especially their excellent weaving skill. On the one hand, Fuken Shu (Aboriginal Affairs Bureau) provided raw materials to aborigines for production; on the other hand, they introduced new advanced weaving machine and trained aboriginal women or girls to learn making Japanese dress³. Actually, the reform of dress belonged to a part of civilizing projects, which aimed to assimilate aboriginal customs (Wang 2003:167). Traditional weaving machines were confiscated and aboriginal clothes gradually were replaced by kimono or other Japanese clothes. As a result, less aboriginal women knew the traditional weaving technique.

Facing urgent situation of the loss of aboriginal culture, the national consciousness was aroused and more aboriginal tribes claimed for returning the earth belonging to aborigines, which was well known as the beginning of the Aboriginal Movement in the 1980s. The activists published newspaper and magazines to advocate aborigines should return back to their own homeland to recover aboriginal culture, reconstruct the social structure and the history belonging to aborigines, and reestablish the cultural chronology. And aboriginal tribes, then, began to demand to change the name “Fan” (savage), “Gaoshan nationality”, “Gaosha nationality” or “mountainous tribes”, which filled with the color of racism and discrimination to much neutral term “aborigines” and called for self-autonomy. The revision of “aborigine” eventually went by the passage of constitution until 1994 and the nine nationalities were Atayal, Saisiat, Thao, Bunun, Rukai, Paiwan, Puyuma, Ami and Yami (Tian 2012:48-49,59). Furthermore, some other tribes requested official identification as new nationality basing on their social and cultural identity. Therefore, nowadays there are eleven aboriginal groups, and the new nationalities are Sakizaya, Truku, Sediq and Kavalan except the other nine.

In the cases I observe, the powerful voices of aborigines also resound in museums, which have to adjust their ways of exhibiting under such new indigenous narrative. No matter the earlier museums in Taiwan or China mainland both are influenced by Japanese academic discourses that use the term or concept “Gaoshan nationality” and divide them into seven or nine groups⁴. Museum experts need to distinguish and rebuilt the cultural affiliated relationship between collections and aboriginal groups, and highlight cultural diversity and characteristics. One strategy was to materialize each aboriginal culture into some typical technique or object. Moreover, some museums even became the battle field for aborigines to fight for more rights and recover aboriginal culture. For example, Shung Ye Museum of Formosan Aborigines found in 1994, is a special museum for exhibiting aboriginal material culture and promoting recovering the lost aboriginal culture. This museum develops series of projects and exhibitions by cooperating with aboriginal tribes, and becomes the space to show subjectivity of aborigines, the forum to voice and the classroom for traditional technique teaching (Shung Ye Museum of Formosan Aborigines 2003, 2008, 2010).

Nowadays many museums face the challenges from post-colonialist critique and more indigenous people demand repatriating their ancestor's remains. But some Taiwan aborigines devote to establishing cooperation with museums rather than

requesting returning aboriginal objects to the tribes, and possess the notion that "leave relics in the museum, but return knowledge to tribes" (National Museum of Prehistory in Taiwan 2008:13). The purpose of the project of "Atayal Traditional Clothes and Related Objects Reproduction" of 2004 between National Museum of Prehistory and Yetong Workshop is to save the lost traditional weaving technique by reproducing aboriginal objects. Museums have become the place to find authentic objects and indigenous knowledge. The reproduction and recovery of traditional technique emphasizes the "authenticity" that means what museums provide are real objects and come from aboriginal tribes, aborigines could fully observe these collections, including the material, texture, color, style, stitch, and raw material and making technique of accessories, and then make these objects according to traditional steps, from planting ramie, spinning, weaving then to making clothes.

Conclusion

Aboriginal objects seem to be silent collections in the museums, but in their biography, they are alive by giving social and cultural meanings, which transfer among different spaces and times. Museums assembling aboriginal objects become arenas where powers struggle with each other and provide special context for representing Taiwan aborigines and their culture. In such cultural contact zone, political and scholarly discourses impose upon these objects and shape or reshape their meanings by contextualization and recontextualization. The relationship between things and human intertwine in the network of meanings, and it writes the biography of the social life of aboriginal objects. Meanwhile, standing on the point of these external powers, aboriginal objects actually become tools to represent the image of "Other" — Taiwan aborigine as well as recognize and construct "Self" — Western countries, China mainland and Taiwan. These four powers frame practices of collecting and exhibiting.

In the colonial context, civilizing projects were finished by missionary work and political activities, both of which desired to eliminate barbarous nature of aborigines and disciplined aborigines' behaviors and believed that they needed to be saved by enlightenment. Aboriginal objects in the museums or expositions therefore became teaching materials of civilizing lessons. Among the colonial powers, the practice of Japanese would be an interesting case. The practice of collecting and exhibiting was one part of project for civilizing Taiwan aborigines, and could be seen as an indispensable step for modernization. At the same time, aboriginal objects were also considered as trophies of colonial expansion, which were used as evidences to show Japan had been a colonial empire. The museums and expositions depicted an epitome of Japanese imperial possessing oversea colonies, advanced culture by exhibiting aboriginal "primitive" art and uncivilized society, and then Japanese colonial expansion was legalized.

Additionally, aboriginal objects involve in the process of decolonizing and constructing harmonious multiethnic image. However, colonial discourses still existed in the museums and have become a historical fragment embedding in post-colonial

discourses. The museums of China mainland or Taiwan both denied the image Japanese created that aboriginal culture was one part of Japanese culture by ethnographical, linguistic, historical and archaeological evidences. Meanwhile, both of them emphasized cultural diversity and used aboriginal objects for nation-building, but they took different strategies to exhibit serving for distinct ideologies. The exhibition was also deeply influenced by political discourses. The collections of Tsinghua University were divided into three parts, relics belonging to Southwest Minority, Tibet and Mongolia, and Taiwan Gaoshan (Archives of Tsinghua University 1948: 1-4:2-083). Such category changed until the nationwide historical and linguistic investigation in minority areas and the nationality identification since the 1950s. Under such political and scholarly narrative, the microcosmic world in the museum was a Big Family of 56 nationalities, each of which owned distinctive culture and characteristic objects. In contrast, aboriginal objects in museums of Taiwan are sued to rewrite the history of Taiwan and underline its own unity and continuity, which weaken the link between China mainland and Taiwan.

Taiwan aborigines, though, examine themselves through observing “Others”——western people, Japanese and Chinese. Take tour in Japan mainland as example, it was considered as another strategy for civilizing Taiwan Han people and aborigines. The police station had ever introduced Japanese civilization to aborigines and selected aborigines to tour and considered that would be a valid way to “enlighten intellectual darkness” (Chen 1997:500). From 1910 to 1929, there were 274 aborigines go to Japan for tour (Quoted in Lu 2005:107), and what they saw was advanced weapon, highly organized military, and orderly society, which symbolized civilization. Aborigines tried to seek and evoke self-identity since the 1980s. Redefining Taiwan aboriginal objects was put into the Aboriginal Movement and aborigines were active in recovering traditional culture though cooperation with museums. Indigenous knowledge and aborigines influenced and got involved in exhibitions and other programs of museums. Consequently, museum is not just the cultural contact zone with entangled powers, but also the storage where aborigines could find authentic aboriginal objects and gain knowledge because of the lost of traditional making technique and even some ritual activities. Whereas the paradox is that these aboriginal objects leave away from their birth place, aboriginal tribes, to museums and are exhibited as collections, which have lost their social and cultural meaning. At the same time, museums, the materialized world reduce and essentialize aboriginal culture as some kind of object or technique, which is view as the whole traditional culture of aboriginal tribes.

Notes

1. Aborigines launched aboriginal movements for political, economic, and cultural rights since the 1980s. In 1998, some aborigines of Yami claims for changing the name “Yami” to “Tau”. However, the vote among Yami tribes divided half-and-half for and against the act. Nowadays, the names of “Yami” and “Tau” are both

approved by law.

2. From Taiwan Recovery to the 1980s, Taiwan aborigines were divided into 9 ethnic groups, Atayal, Rukai, Paiwan, Puyuma, Ami, Yami, Saisiat, Thao and Bunun. However, there were 14 ethnic groups identified by the authority since the Taiwan Aboriginal Movement.

3. In order to develop economy, Fuken Shu planned to provide seeds of economic plants or weaving machine to aborigines as awards. Additionally, the Japanese authority employed professional teachers to teach aboriginal women new weaving and tailor skills, and they even put studying weaving and tailor into the educational projects. After the training, some aboriginal women could make Japanese dress by themselves. (See Police Bureau of Taiwan Governor-General 1997:295, 279, 281, 711-712)

4. Before and after the Taiwan recovery, scholars in Taiwan and China mainland mainly ever accepted the category of aborigines from researches of Japanese scholars. However, there were several opinions about the category, including six, seven, eight, nine, ten, and twelve ethnic groups in the Japanese occupation period basing on cultural customs, geographic distribution, folklores and linguistic or ethnologic evidences. Since 1945, some scholars in Taiwan considered the category of nine ethnic groups would be reasonable according to the materials from different disciplines; while, earlier scholars in China mainland, such as Lin Huixiang and Jin Zutong accepted the category of seven ethnic groups. Both academic opinions directly influenced the exhibitions in museums, until the 1980s, most museums began to use the term “aborigine” and the category of fourteen ethnic groups. (See Zeng:2005, Lin 1991, Jin 1948)

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