Shan-Mei, a Tsou aboriginal village in Taiwan, is widely known as a legend of environmental conservation, where ecotourism has been successfully combined with integrated community development. Indigenous knowledge containing “ecological wisdom” and decision-making based on consensus are perceived to be the greatest contributors to this achievement.

I conducted three months of fieldwork in Shan-Mei, primarily using the methods of participant observation and semi-structured interviews. The purpose of this study was to reexamine the ecotourism and community development in Shan-Mei. I found that the ecotourism project is ecologically based, but not ecologically sound. With a combination of nature-based tourism and ethnic tourism, and later expansion into mass tourism, Shan-Mei’s ecotourism project yielded negative environmental impacts. The unplanned development of mass tourism especially brought overcrowding that endangered a fragile fish species and the surrounding ecosystem. Lack of education about environmental issues created misperceptions among tourists and local people.
about the role of conservation in ecotourism. The community also faced problems of inappropriate government intervention, declining local participation in the project, and internal conflicts of interest. There was a need for better training and implementation of the interpretive program, professional assistance by outside experts for environmental assessment and planning, and better protection for indigenous rights in the laws of the nation state. This case illustrates that ecologically sound ecotourism not only requires indigenous knowledge but also expertise and legal protection that recognizes local autonomy. Despite the shortcomings, the Shan-Mei community was found to be proactive in creating a better future for its residents. The community used the revenue from ecotourism and government aid to establish its own social welfare program, fund various projects to revive traditional culture, assist agricultural development, and improve everyone's quality of life. The community benefited from ecotourism and community development in terms of inventing a hybrid Shan-Mei culture and forming a stronger sense of identity and autonomy. Shan-Mei provides invaluable lessons in its experience with ecotourism in its strategic adaptation to modernization.
Ecotourism, Community Development, and Local Autonomy: the Experience of Shan-Mei Aboriginal Community in Taiwan

by

Pei-Yao Lee

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APPROVED:

Redacted for privacy

Major Professor, Representing Applied Anthropology

Redacted for privacy

Chair of Department of Anthropology

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Dean of Graduate School

I understand that my thesis will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University libraries. My signature below authorizes release of my thesis to any reader upon request.

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Pei-Yao Lee, Author
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Chapter 1
Introduction

The Shan-Mei Legend

Tanayiku Natural Conservation Park, an ecotourism area managed by a local community, has become the center spotlight in mass media reports, in Taiwanese government propaganda, in academia research, and in attracting international visitors. With its focus on conserving "gu-yu" (a kind of cyprinid fish) and its surrounding stream ecosystem, the local community named Shan-Mei opened Tanayiku to the public at January 1995, and started an ecotourism operation. Located in Mt. Ali area of southern Taiwan, Shan-Mei village is an aboriginal community with an intact natural environment. Inhabited by Tsou aborigines, the village still preserves certain parts of traditional culture. Nevertheless, it has been and is being impacted and threatened by various forces of modernization. Those threats include the loss of language, impoverishment,

\[1\text{Scientific name: Varicorhinus Barbatulus, belonging to the family of Cyprinidae is the dominant species of fish in Tanayiku creek; it is also known as } ku-hua \text{ (bitter flower) in Taiwan. Its normal length is 15-20 centimeters; it prefers flat, shallow water areas upstream with temperature lower than 68F.}

\[2\text{I followed most Taiwanese researchers, using the term "aboriginal" instead of "indigenous" to indicate the native Austronesian people in Taiwan and their culture, to differentiate from the use of "indigenous" referring to local Taiwanese.} \]
and the loss of traditional values. Starting with a grass-roots movement to preserve streams and endangered species of gu-yu, in 1995 the Shan-Mei community decided to share its environment and Tsou heritage with the public in the form of ecotourism. The first successful fish festival was held during the following year. Since then more and more tourists, mostly majority Han Chinese people, have been attracted to Shan-Mei for its stream recreation space, mountain scenery, and the exotic appeal of aboriginal Tsou culture. Prosperity from ecotourism has transferred Shan-Mei from a remote, almost intact mountain village to a hot destination for recreation, where tourism has become a significant social reality and institution.

Taiwanese society views Shan-Mei as a paradigm of sustainable development based on indigenous knowledge. It is recognized as the “first case of ecotourism and sustainable development in Taiwan”. Most media reports describe Shan-Mei as “having unusual success integrating community development with Tanayiku’s environmental conservation” and “being an outstanding case of grass-roots, aboriginal community development”. What makes Shan-Mei, so famous and special? J.Baird Callicott, a well-known philosopher of environmental ethics who visited Shan-mei during the summer 2000, observed that it demonstrates the integration of the three critical elements of ecotourism- ecological conservation, economic development, and education to increase environmental awareness; it also exemplifies the importance of the
fourth dimension-cultural preservation (Callicott, 2000). It is this uniqueness that attracts great attention from various audiences to Shan-Mei.

The Social Context in Taiwan

For fifty years after the end of Japanese colonization in 1945, the Taiwanese government focused mainly on the improvement of the island's macro-economic development at the expense of ignoring and repressing other aspects of social importance such as the environment and multi-cultural issues. In the last few decades the stunning rate of economic growth and dramatic increase in GDP and standard of living has been accompanied by terrible environmental destruction, characterized by serious soil erosion from excessive logging and inadequate land use regulations, contamination of drinking water resulting in poor public health, and air pollution in urban areas. Realizing the seriousness of environmental degradation, the government began to formulate a body of law and administration concerning environmental protection during the mid 1970s. Based on the German model, the general conceptual framework of Taiwanese law recognizes individual and public spheres, and emphasizes the balance between them; it is a system based on private property rights protected by civil laws, yet it places the importance on government in enforcing administrative laws and all other laws concerning public affairs. With regard to

3 Taken from Callicott’s address to the conference of “Environmental Conservation and Biodiversity” held in Chia-i University in August 2000.
El conservation and environmental law, the rationale is that all natural resources are open-access resources for all citizens. The state is the only institution that can legally manage and enforce laws pertaining to natural resources. Hence, the government controls Tanayiku Creek, the fish stock and other habitats of the ecosystem, and some parts of lands in Shan-Mei.

Besides the fragile environment, the socio-cultural status of aboriginal culture is an issue. As a minority in Taiwanese Han society, the aboriginal population usually is marginalized in most aspects of social development, and suffers particularly from impoverishment resulting from economic oppression. For most Han Chinese people in Taiwan, aboriginal ethnicity represents a dual image of a less civilized group in the modern world with inferior capability and the romantic quaintness of a comparatively primitive group with a natural lifestyle. In recent years, however, ethnic tourism in aboriginal communities is gradually gaining popularity, and Shan-Mei is particularly recognized to be on the cutting-edge for putting into practice the most progressive idea of integrating tourism with environmental conservation. The Taiwanese public has been surprised to find that an aboriginal group has reached such a high level of accomplishment. Moreover, what makes Shan-Mei special is its uncommon strategy of development in terms of the way it interacts with the mainstream society. Generally speaking, other aboriginal communities in search of community development share a common strategy of pursuing development through strong proclamations of aboriginal rights, which represent a form of resistance and criticism against the Han Chinese society and the national state. Instead of confronting mainstream values and authority, Shan-Mei focuses on
environmental conservation and sustainable community development. Therefore, the story of Shan-Mei serves as a model for other indigenous communities nationwide, and as an interesting case for media and academia to investigate. The government used Shan-Mei to market its policy of "holistic grass-roots community development" in a national campaign planned and supported by the Council for Cultural Affairs beginning in 1994.

The multifaceted representation of Shan-Mei attracts diverse visitors in addition to ecotourists. Various people come to visit for different reasons; tourists look forward to an entertaining or eye-opening experience; reporters flood into the community to write touching stories that uplift readers; community planners go in and out as consultants; experts on natural resource management try to analyze the rationale for conservation believed to be rooted in traditional, indigenous knowledge; government officials wish to get involved to show they are progressive; and environmentalists and cultural/aboriginal activists go there on pilgrimages to validate their utopia.

Objectives

As for me, I planned a one-day trip to Tanayiku Natural Conservation Park in the summer of 1999, motivated by curiosity and anticipation about

---

4 The Council for Cultural Affairs under the Executive Branch of government in Taiwan was founded on November 1981 to coordinate and guide the various ministries and councils of the Executive Branch in cooperating to promote national culture, including promoting integrated community development.
ecotourism and indigenous ecological wisdom. Impressed by the swarms of gu-yu in the creek and the crowd of visitors in the park, I decided to investigate the keys to the success of this project that differentiate it from most other cases where the destructive impacts of tourism development are evident.

Most previous studies of ecotourism shed light on the problems and prospects related to economic and policy dimensions. A few studies focus on aspects of socio-cultural sensitivity and maintaining the integrity of local people, but cases of ecotourism planned and managed by an aboriginal community are rare. As for anthropological literature on tourism, most studies have been carried out from one of three perspectives: 1) Tourism as development or acculturation; 2) Tourism as a personal transition; 3) Tourism as a kind of superstructure imposed on the society. This thesis focuses on the first of those perspectives. The dominant argument in this literature takes host societies as passive receivers or even victims of negative impacts of tourism, which may not be the complete and satisfactory explanation of community-planned and managed ecotourism. My primary objective is to assess Shan-Mei’s community-based ecotourism in a broader context, and especially in terms of its contribution to sustainable development. Is ecotourism a feasible path leading to total sustainable development? Will the aboriginal character of the destination area make a big difference to the process and outcome of ecotourism development? What implications does this case study have for the preservation of aboriginal culture?

Another objective is to evaluate the impact of ecotourism on the community with respect to environmental conservation and cultural
revitalization. Since most studies of Shan-Mei done by Taiwanese researchers have not provided much local voice, I hope to present the native version of this Shan-Mei legend. How do local people view their success? How do locals perceive and deal with ecotourism-induced changes in the community?
Chapter 2
Background on the Shan-Mei Community

The Geographical and Societal Setting

Shan-Mei is located on a plain in the southern part of the Mt. Ali alpine area, and covers 588.8 hectares of alpine reservation lands; arable land is about 39%, with 60% forest and woodland. The village is situated in the east corner of the Chia-i county, approximately 40 kilometers from Chia-i city. The natural vegetation is primarily subtropical and forests contain heterogeneity of plant species due to a wide range of elevation from 500 to 1200 meters.

Tanayiku Creek, a tributary of the Tseng-wen River—a primary river in southern Taiwan, is a small to medium creek descending through Tanayiku gorge. Its water volume varies between the rainy (May to October) and dry (November to April) seasons. Of several fish species, gu-yu is the major one and the favorite of local residents. There is no agreed upon meaning of “Tanayiku” in native Tsou language. Some elders explain it as a place where many wild animals gather to drink water, and thus symbolizes a paradise for wild animals. Mayor Kao defines Tanayiku as “Wan Yo Gu” (a worry-free valley). According to a demographic survey in 2000, the Tsou population is 7,541. The total indigenous population of Taiwan is 390,244, and the total population of Taiwan is approximately 22,000,000. The population of Shan-Mei village, according to a 1998 survey, is 531. Fifty-four percent of the villagers are male and 46% are female. Ninety-five percent of residents are educated; the largest segment has completed elementary school, and the smallest segment is college graduates.
Figure 1. Location of Taiwan
Figure 2. Aborigines in Taiwan
The Traditional Social Structure and Culture

Shan-Mei has been inhabited by one of the Tsou tribes for about two hundred years. According to tradition, the entire Tsou ethnic group is hierarchically divided into big tribes (hosa) and small tribes. The former posits higher rank than the latter. A big tribe with several small tribes constitutes a complete socio-political unit. As a small tribe, Shan-Mei belonged to the Tapangu big tribe, and had no autonomy with regards to military, politics, economy, and religious rituals. The holding of significant rituals like the warfare ceremony (mayasvi), was restricted to big tribes only. This hierarchical structure penetrated all dimensions of Tsou culture. As a patrilineal society, the basic social and economic unit of Tsou was the extended family. However, the lineage and clan actually control economic production and political leadership. The top of the power structure is the chief; only the leader of the specific clan called “peonsi” in a big tribe can be the chief. Though the chief monopolizes power, a committee of tribal elders, representing each clan is of crucial importance to consultation and decision-making in tribal affairs. In small tribes, leaders of lineages controlled decision-making and administration of communal affairs. Land ownership was controlled by extended families, while hunting and fishing grounds were controlled by lineages. No individual owned land or had permanent rights to any land; rather, each person was allocated the use-right of land by the leaders. In summary, all things were communal property, and all means of production, including labor were under the collective control.
Figure 3. Location of Tsou and Shan-Mei
Traditional Tsou Culture

Hunting and gathering was originally the Tsou way of life. Local people usually described this tradition by talking about how they or their ancestors used to make a living by hunting wild animals, catching fish and shrimp in the creek, and harvesting wild vegetables and grains. Hunting was considered as a men's activity. Women were excluded from this activity, and it was taboo for them to enter the hunting storage shed and to touch hunting utensils. Material culture included clothes, artifacts, and architecture. Tsou culture was well known for a preference for red color, which was used widely in traditional clothes and in other textiles. Red represented nobility and was the main color for men's clothes, while women's clothes were often colored dark blue. Meanwhile, if people said “our traditional color”, it meant red. Bamboo-weaving baskets were the main containers for gathering, and still serve as representative artifacts of Tsou. Used in hunting, the game knife and its rattan belt, made of bones of big game animals, and bracelets made of boar teeth were significant artifacts as well. The bamboo-weaving baskets were simply a practical tool, while hunting accessories were linked with the male warrior spirit, and usually had some taboo attached to them. A kiosk styled with thatched roof (herfur) was the typical model of traditional public space; the men's house (kuba), still is perceived by Shan-Mei locals as the most focal symbol of Tsou tradition, because of its sacred function in rituals, and its implication of higher rank for the tribe living where it is located. The lineage house (pesia) used for the millet ceremony is another often-mentioned illustration of tradition with
respect to religion and the kinship system. A few local extended families still have their lineage houses. *Homeryaya* is one of two important rituals in Tsou tradition, meaning “the celebration for the millet Harvest”. Usually this ritual is held separately at the lineage house of each lineage between the seventh and the eighth full moon each year. *Mayasvi* is an annual ritual of warfare, the other important ritual in Tsou culture. It is staged by men throughout the society, including big tribes and small tribes. It contains serious religious meanings associated with the worldview of the Tsou. The ceremony usually lasts for one to three days starting in the middle of August.

*Fishing Practices and Management*

Traditionally, the rivers belonging to Tsou tribes were under common property management. In Shan-Mei, there was a set of rules and norms regulating the extraction of its abundant aquatic resources. Each lineage owned a section of the river; the boundary along each section was clearly recognized and all tribal members were supposed to respect it. For example, the Tanayiku Creek was owned by five lineages; in the old days, if one lineage wanted to fish across the boundary, it had to borrow the right of usage from the lineage in charge. The price of usage was three boars sent as gifts for each one hundred meters. Traditional fishing gear included a net, fish fork, fish pole, and botanical poison. Various fishing methods were used depending on seasonal change and the actual situation. Both individual fishing and collective fishing were practiced. Collective fishing was carried out by the lineage or the tribe,
and the primary method was botanical poisoning, which was not allowed for individual fishing. The botanical poison comes from a native bush plant called "gua-fu-mu". The poison was spread with the flowing water to make the adult fish temporary numb for local people waiting down stream to collect them. Meanwhile, the poison would leave most small fish healthy and safe, since they usually stayed in shallow waters near the bank. Thus a base of young fish stock remained for sustainable use. After the fish were harvested, the catch was assembled and distributed to households by the elders of each lineage; based on the principle of equity and sharedness, the fish would be distributed to each household in proportion to the number of its members.

The Current Social and Political System in Shan-Mei

The hierarchical difference between the big tribes and small tribes has officially been erased; all tribes have the same status as village units under the current local political system. Different levels of local administration system in Taiwan are illustrated in the following diagram.
The township is larger in terms of population, and may include several villages; it has jurisdiction over the village in the administrative system. Shan-Mei is one of eleven villages under the A-li Township; Shan-Mei consists of seven wards. Public offices and a council are set up to govern the townships. The mayor and councilmen, elected by township citizens, have four-year terms of office; the mayor of the village is elected by village citizens, while the ward head is either elected by ward residents or appointed by the village mayor. The village mayor has significant power in local political structure, while normally the position of ward head is of lesser importance. Shan-Mei to some degree still is a male-dominant society, emphasizing the importance of seniority. Class stratification is not strict, though members from elite lineages have more access to resources and are more likely to engage in local politics. One radical change is in land ownership. Private property has been imposed by the modern legal
system. Land has become an exchangeable commodity purchased and owned by individuals. The system of communal land management and collective labor has collapsed. As a result, the lineage no longer has the control over individual economic activities, including production and investment.

**Prevailing Traditional Values**

There are several core values passed down through the generations that were explained to me proudly and repeatedly by almost all informants: sharedness\(^5\), consensus, respect, and emphasis on the collective. Among these values, local leaders identified consensus and strong obedience as the root of tradition, as well as the basis for Shan-Mei community development. These values are all interrelated. As a culture of sharing, the center of the traditional value system of Tsou culture places priority on collective welfare over that of individuals. Many locals also recognized being introverted (*han-shu*)\(^6\), conservative, and reserved as consistent with tradition in the sense of “born-to –be” Tsou characteristics. Some females also associated male dominance with tradition.

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\(^5\) I chose “sharedness” instead of “sharing” here to convey the local people’s notion that they not only physically share some goods, but they also share a sense of their fate and well-being.

\(^6\) There is no single English word equivalent to *han-shu*, but “introvert” is the closest in meaning.
The Characteristics of Seven Wards

Each ward is geographically separate, and functions as an individual sub-community. In the political and administrative structure of Shan-Mei, wards operating as separate socio-political units influence many aspects of community development. The first and the seventh wards are particularly influential. The Shan-Mei industrial road, starting from milepost 36 of Mt. A-li Highway, runs through the entire village. At an elevation of twelve hundred meters, the first ward (Cacaya) is the highest ward and is the closest to the Mt. A-li Highway. Its population is approximately one hundred. The high elevation is suitable for growing tea. Easy access to the main route makes contact with outsiders frequent, which also has attracted Han Chinese into the ward to start processing industries for agricultural products such as tea and bamboo shoots. Being aware of its relative isolation from other wards in Shan-Mei and surrounded by Han Chinese communities nearby, residents have developed a strong sense of unity and self-reliance. The ward has a wall full of colorful drawings illustrating Tsou tribal life, and blossoming gardens surrounding each household. The neat appearance and beauty of the ward usually amazes visitors who call it the "garden neighborhood."

The second ward (Yamakayua) has a population of 40 to 50 people. Most residents belong to the Ann extended family, and there is still a well-preserved Ann lineage house (basia). The third and fourth wards (Tamayaena) are closely adjacent to one another in a relatively wide, flat area. The total population is 140. These two wards serve as the center of the village, containing
Figure 5. Map of the Seven Wards
a village administration office, community development center, elementary school, police station, three grocery stores (one owned by Han Chinese), and several churches. The fifth ward (Yabasauni) is the smallest ward, 30 residents, as well as the only one located away from the main road. A narrow lane connects it to the third ward. Houses in the fifth ward are quite dispersed among huge bamboo bushes. The sixth ward (Small Payai) is abundant with diverse wild habitat, and has a population of 70. Close to the bank of the Tsen-wen River, this ward is ideal for water recreation.

The seventh ward (Large Payai) is the most populated ward with about 170 residents. Many informants say the seventh ward is a good example of a more traditional lifestyle; residents go hunting frequently in remote mountain areas nearby, preserve the lineage house, celebrate the millet harvest (*homeyaya*), and hold traditional rituals of ancestor worship. Three shamans living in the ward are still sought for healing diseases and correcting bad luck. In contrast to the partial conversion to Western religion observed in other wards, most residents still hold traditional beliefs. This ward shares a common trait with the first ward in holding frequent neighborhood gatherings, but it is distinctly different in maintaining a clear structure of the traditional extended family. Ann, Chung, and Yang are the predominant families here. This ward is recognized as an aggressive community without a strong sense of unity compared to the first ward. As the two wards with the strongest charisma, first and seventh wards are compared frequently in local discussion of community development.
Chapter 3
Literature Review

Research on community-based ecotourism is relatively new and rare. The uniqueness of the case of Shan-Mei lies in the fact that not only is it community-based ecotourism, but also it is locally initiated and managed; furthermore, Shan-Mei is recognized for achieving sustainable development, which is a rare occurrence judging by the literature on tourism. Community-based ecotourism can be described as ecotourism owned and managed by the community; it implies that a community takes care of its natural resources and at the same time gains income through operating a tourism enterprise and uses that income to better their lives. Such an enterprise involves conservation, business, and community development. In addition, the nature of Shan-Mei’s aboriginal culture adds to the complexity of the situation. My review of literature will draw from various sources to examine three issues related to schemes of tourism development with a focus on community. The first issue is ecotourism and sustainability; the second is the role of the community approach and local knowledge in relation to sustainable development; and the third is the debate on the tourism-induced changes in the culture of destination areas.
Ecotourism and Sustainability

The idea of ecotourism has become increasingly popular and drawn much attention in political circles and in the social science literature. The various actors involved each have their own distinctive perspectives on this issue. This discussion aims at examining the meaning of sustainability within the framework of ecotourism, and the criteria for determining if ecotourism is sustainable environmentally.

The Search for Sustainability

From the very beginning, tourism has been promoted as a panacea, a soft option for developing an industry with few negative impacts. Nevertheless, in reality it has become increasingly apparent that tourism creates impacts of various types and levels of seriousness (Mathieson and Wall 1982). Butler (1992) points out that tourism is not only an industry, but also a form and agent of development and change, and must be recognized as such. Typically, tourism as a problematic development process fails to take full account of future social costs and benefits in favor of more pressing current demands. The extremely competitive nature of the tourism industry mitigates against necessary internal controls such as selective marketing and placing specific limits on development, and instead fosters a continuous push for rapid growth. As a consequence, tourism under certain circumstances can contribute to irreversible environmental degradation. Hence, there has been an ideological shift from an
exploitative to a sustainable approach to tourism development with major concern for environmental conservation. Though scientists, conservationists, politicians, and professionals all address sustainable tourism development in different ways, some elements are commonly perceived as essential: an integrated approach, the necessity of conservation, cultural compatibility, long term planning, and local involvement. Emphasizing an integrated approach, in particular, indicates a conceptual shift recognizing that tourism consists of a mixed system of elements and linkages derived from the economy, environment, and society (Farrell 1992: 116): no component in this interrelated system may be more important than any other. Another significant shift is the emphasis on local involvement as a principle of sustainable tourism development. Local society is no longer an advertising image aimed at a distinct clientele, but has become one pole at the heart of a system of action in relation to a center (Lanfant and Graburn 1992: 111). Defined by The World Wild Fund for Nature (1997) as “tourism to protect natural areas, as a means of economic gain through natural resource preservation,” ecotourism thus evolved into an ideal approach under the call for sustainable tourism development. Considering the diversity of interests in ecotourism, the term is surrounded by confusion. Although it is difficult to reach consensus concerning definitions and criteria, generally ecotourism can be seen as particular variant of alternative tourism, which aims at providing tourists an experience with nature including birds, animals, scenery, etc., while having very low impact on the environment, and at the same time being ecologically sound and respectful of the needs of all human and nonhuman creatures involved. Advocates of ecotourism usually claim that it
is a potential win-win situation of adequate development accompanied by a well-conserved environment emphasizing attributes of ecological and socio-cultural integrity, along with responsibility and sustainability. The rationale can be seen in the definition given by the Ecotourism Society (1991): “purposeful travel to natural areas to understand the culture and natural history of the environment; taking care not to alter the integrity of the ecosystem; producing economic opportunities that make the conservation of natural resources beneficial to local people.”

Controversy Surrounding the Sustainability of Ecotourism

According to the definitional criteria, ecotourism is assumed to be a perfect approach to achieve the goal of overall sustainability. Nevertheless, despite a great deal of anecdotal information and case studies, critics have pointed out the problems in practice and potential costs of ecotourism. First of all, Cater (1994) suggests that an important distinction should be made between how it is most commonly interpreted as a product and what it should embody as a principle. According to Cater, ecotourism is identified as a niche or market segment equated with nature, which may also include the cultural attractions of the destination. In this case, there is a danger that ecotourism could degenerate into a marketing mechanism, producing many of the negative effects of traditional tourism it was intended to avoid. Furthermore, it is argued that the broad expectations of ecotourism to simultaneously advance both conservation and socio-economic aims are paradoxical and unfeasible; what has been
observed in practice is that ecotourism may be ecologically based but not ecologically sound. Another argument is that one of ecotourism’s most serious impacts is the expropriation of its destination, mostly “virgin” territories - national parks, wildlife parks and other wilderness areas. Though this approach may seem benign, environmentalists in many cases view ecotourism as a threat to the natural environment itself (Weaver 1998, Cater 1994). As ecotourism becomes more popular, a growing number of tourists may contribute to increasing the stress on the natural environment of destination areas, which are usually small and vulnerable. (Weaver 1998: 214-215).

Another major concern is the issue of local benefits. Significant social and political issues such as the maldistribution of resources, inequalities in political representation and power, are often ignored. Results from many empirical case studies have also revealed that contrary to its claims, local people do not necessarily benefit from eco-tourism (Belsky 1999, Butler 1992, Cater 1994, Nash 1996). Instead, local residents tend to bear the problems associated with ecotourism development while, at the same time, most of the benefits are siphoned away to outside stakeholders. Tourism-related employment is greatly overrated; local residents are usually left with low-paid service jobs, and usually they are not assured of year-round employment with the risk of being laid off during the off-season. Moreover, as it is not uncommon for ecotourism to be situated in homelands of indigenous peoples, controversial issues concerning indigenous rights and culture have been addressed as well (Goldfarb 1989, Akama 1996). In such cases the need for the development and maintenance of protected areas is very likely to supersede local benefits, for example, a forced
discontinuation or change in the local population’s pattern of subsistence because of new regulations to preserve the environment. It is also argued that ecotourism development serves to exacerbate existing internal conflicts by providing a high level of wealth to only a small number of participants and by generating land-use conflicts (Weaver 1998: 68, Belsky 1999). With these empirical observations of the failure to meet ecologically and socially sound standards, there is a growing quest for reexamination of the sustainability of ecotourism.

Community and Local Knowledge In Relation To Sustainable Development

Before launching into the discussion of the role of community and local knowledge, clarification must be made about the definition of sustainable development. The concept of sustainable development is intrinsically vague, elusive, and overused. In relation to community development and local knowledge, it is recognized as the integration of cultural, economic, political, and environmental factors in the process of development, with the expectation of future stability.

Since 1980s, more and more failures of “top-down”, externally conceived projects and programs have led to the rethinking of the dominant approach to development, and the elaboration of locally based, indigenous strategies. The assumption is that people will be more responsive if they are central to the design and implementation of programs that affect them and if they have made some investment or commitment to them (Marsden 1994).
Moreover, a community that recognizes common property is considered robust, workable, and often more conducive both to participatory democracy and to environmental preservation than a community with a system of private property. In addition, the essence of community structure is its capability to develop participatory decision-making, which can be combined with a consensus-based approach required by sustainable development strategies. Hence, community is taken as an effective implementation mechanism of more people-centered, sustainable development, since it is a bottom-up form "which emphasizes development in the community rather than development of the community" (Hall 1991). It is suggested that the participation of local residents, their acquisition of skills, the application of traditional knowledge, and their sense of "ownership" of sustainable development efforts, has proved to be crucial (Harris 2000: 8). Evaluations of community-based cases also have revealed some key elements for achieving sustainable development: democratization of decision-making, research as a basis and stimulus for sustainable development, investments in people, restoring and enhancing local culture, strengthening social networks, and creative involvement of traditional social institutions (Hoff 1998).

In the discussion of sustainable development, local knowledge has a particular set of qualities associated with tradition, folk, indigenous, intuition, informality in contrast to formal knowledge which emanates from laboratories, research stations, government offices, and NGOs (Ellen 2001: 165). It is commonly believed that these local knowledge systems will provide the bases for increasing productivity, and for encouraging alternative living arrangements,
because local/ indigenous people, including peasants, nomads, and natives, have survived for centuries in harmony with nature; they were aware of that there were limits to growth, and that they had developed highly adaptive strategies to cope with local conditions, which can provide the basis for planning for the future (Marsden 1994: 46). Based on this logic, Marsden emphasizes the active role of local decision-making with respect to resource management, and on how cultural diversity is causally associated with biological diversity. Nevertheless, there is a emerging call for critical examination of the definition and conception of local knowledge in the context of contemporary development theories. It is argued that the true significance of local knowledge lies in the practical life experience of people in particular places rather than in generic knowledge-bearing institutions, and in the selectively useful information embodied in traditional practices rather than the whole body of abstract knowledge as a solution to diverse development problems (Ellen 2001). According to Roy Ellen (2001: 164), the term “local knowledge” should indicate the knowledge used by a local population and may combine the insights of ancestral knowledge, practical experience, the knowledge of other neighboring local peoples, regional scholarly traditions, or even scientific or official knowledge acquired through an agricultural extension officer, government department, or television; it is empirical and dynamic rather than theoretical knowledge. He then argues that no local knowledge can be the solution to all problems of sustainability, since the limits to sustainable extraction of natural resources are ultimately defined by local population density and market demand. However, the study of local knowledge can provide many useful lessons by acknowledging what local
people understand, and how it arises directly from their practical experiences in the context of a specific cultural system and environment.

**Detraditionalization and Cultural Comoditization**

The connection between the transformation of culture and tourism development has been addressed by social scientists across various disciplines. By virtue of the complexity of social changes that occur in tourism development, there has been a long-standing debate about whether the tourism should be blamed for the cultural "comoditization" and "detraditionalization" of the host community.

**Lost of Tradition or Reinvention of Tradition**

Using terms such as "detraditionalization" and the emergence of "post-traditional society" to describe what they see as an inevitable aspect of the "formation of modernity", Ulrich Beck (1992) and Anthony Giddens (1991) cited in Thompson (1994: 89) argue that in the early phases of modernization, many institutions depended on traditions that were characteristics of pre-modern societies; meanwhile, as the process of modernization enters a more advanced phase (what Beck calls "reflexive modernization and what Giddens calls "high" or "late" modernity), pre-existing traditions are increasingly undermined and most forms of social activity, both at the collective and at the individual level, take place in contexts which are increasingly stripped of traditional mechanisms.
of support. They regard tradition as a hierarchically differentiated way of life, both within particular traditions, and with regard to how other ways of life are evaluated. Under this condition, identities are ascribed, and the "authorial taken-for-grantedness" of identities precludes the necessity of questioning them, which serves to legitimize the order of things. Two factors contribute to the shift of authority: technology that speeds up communication, and the marketing technology of capitalism. As the cultural realm in any particular cultural setting becomes more pluralistic with influx from different cultures, people lose faith in what has been traditionally sustained within a closed environment.

Differentiation of beliefs and values, it is suggested, then causes the collapse of the exclusive claims and credibility of what was previously homogenous and therefore unquestioned. In conclusion, Heela (1994: 5) argues that "the fact that culture has become increasingly disorganized and weakened, means that people have to turn to their own resources to decide what they value, to organize their priorities, and to make sense of their lives", which is widely seen as a process of individualization.

However, some researchers disagree with the above theories about the clear-cut distinction between the past and the present presented as the periodized contrast between tradition and modernization, and the reference to destructive acculturation that occurs as tribal societies, considered more traditional/primitive, and thus more vulnerable, are exposed to various forms of modernization, especially tourism development. The coexistence thesis holds that people always live with voices of authority emanating from realms transcending the self on the one hand, and with those voices emanating from the
desires, expectations, and competitive or idiosyncratic aspirations of the individual. People are never simply tradition-informed, neither are they simply autonomous. Although ideologies of autonomous self are preferred by scholars today, people, still, are socio-cultural beings. The voice of authority, which appears to come from within oneself, has been acquired through learning established values and practices. Without denying that detraditionalization has taken place, the argument of the coexistence thesis is that this has not resulted in the systematic collapse of authoritative cultural voices.

Another line of argument concerns the changing character of tradition. With reference to four aspects of tradition: hermeneutic, normative, legitimation, and identity, Thompson (1996: 93) argues that there is a gradual decline in the normative and legitimation aspects of tradition, while the other two aspects of tradition, hermeneutic and identity retain their significance. He puts it:

The relation between tradition and modernity is more puzzling and paradoxical than a sharp opposition of this kind would suggest......the decline of traditional authority and the traditional grounding of action (which are the normative and legitimation functions) does not spell the demise of tradition but rather signals a shift in its nature and role, as individuals come to rely more and more on mediated and de-localized traditions as a means of making sense of the world and of creating a sense of belonging (which refer to the hermeneutic and identity part).

Like Thompson, Timothy Luke (1996) argues that it is possible to find ample evidence of “tradition-in modernity” or “modernity-as tradition”. He argues that traditions continue to operate in various ways. Another point evolved from this perspective is that there is a multitude of maternity, including those traditions that are central to this complexity; hence theorizing should focus on
“coexistence” and “interpenetration” of modern-tradition rather than on “replacement” (Heelas 1994:13).

**Authenticity and Cultural Commoditization**

Based on his study of cultural commoditization in tourism, Greenwood (1989) argues that culture⁷ has been exploited as a commodity by the tourism industry, as the host culture is taken advantage of for profit, but does not profit culturally itself; as a result, local culture is made meaningless to the people who once believed in it. Since local culture can be commoditized by anyone without the consent of local participants, it can be expropriated, and the people exploited (Greenwood 1989: 173). Another assumption regarding commoditization is the concept of “staged authenticity”. MacCannell (1973) suggested that the authenticity of local cultural products and human relations, destroyed by the process of commoditization, is replaced with a surrogate “staged authenticity”; for example, in Greenwood’s study of Alarde (1972), the once authentic public ritual became staged performance, a cultural commodity. In his discussion of the concept “authenticity”, Cohen (1988) introduced earlier strict definitions of ethnographer/curator that, in order to be authentic, an object must be created for a traditional purpose and by a traditional artist, and must

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⁷ Following Geertz view, he defined culture as an integrated system of meanings by means of which the nature of reality is established and maintained, not a “come-on” or “part of natural resources” as viewed by economists and tourism planners.
conform to traditional forms, and not be manufactured specifically for the
market. Then he suggests that for anthropologists, authenticity stands for a
quality of life that existed in the society and culture prior to the penetration of
modern Western influences.

Contrary to above claims, Cohen (1988: 374) argues that authenticity
does not have an “objective quality”, but is attributed by modern thought to the
world out there and thus is a socially constructed concept with a connotation
that is not given but negotiable. In addition, he says that commoditization does
not necessarily destroy the meaning of cultural products, either for the locals or
for the tourists, although it may do so under certain conditions. Hence, a
cultural product or a trait, which is at one point generally judged as inauthentic
may become gradually recognized as authentic over time. He calls this
phenomenon “emergent authenticity”; moreover, Cohen recognizes “emergent
authenticity” as one manifestation of the wider phenomenon of “invention of
tradition” (1988: 380). He proposes that local culture usually survives and
revives itself through the process of encountering tourism. Tourism-oriented
products frequently acquire new meanings, as they become “a mark of ethnic or
cultural identity, a vehicle of self-representation before an external public”
(1988: 383); old meanings, however, may remain salient on a different level.
The invention of tradition also shows in cultural performance that in many
situations, the performers might perceive continuity between the traditional and
the new situation, despite the changed context. Identifying tourism as an agent
of change, Greenwood (1989: 183) recognizes that “culture as ‘webs of
significance’ does not have a simple structure, summed up in a statistical mean
called tradition”, and “Local culture, reformulated and revalued in the context of external interests, is itself transformed!” He further made a clear point about the mobilization of culture by remarking that “The objectification of local culture via tourism does not always destroy it; on occasion it transforms and even stimulates its further proliferation” (1989: 183). In conclusion, some current literature proposes reexamination of the assumption of lost tradition, lost authenticity, and therefore the lost local culture in tourism development.
Chapter 4
Methods

Ethnographic interviewing and participant observation were used to collect data during the ten weeks period of fieldwork from July 2000 to early September 2000. In-depth interviews were conducted starting from August 2000, including seven semi-structured interviews, and seven unstructured interviews. A questionnaire (see Appendix A) of fifteen questions was formulated after one-month of participant observation in the field, and was used for semi-structured interviews with varying degrees of alteration during each interview. Most unstructured interviews focused on different themes depending on the informant and the context.

Nature of Interviewees

All informants were local residents except for one Han Chinese who previously resided in the community for one-and-a-half years (see Appendix C for table of informants). Eight out of 14 were male, aged between 40 and 65; six informants were female, with three in their thirties, one in her forties, and two in their fifties. Only four informants were not directly involved with ecotourism or the Community Development Council at that time.

Contacts with informants were made prior to the interviews to explain the study, seek permission to interview and establish an appropriate time and place to meet. All interviews were face-to-face, lasting approximately from one
to two hours each, and were tape-recorded. All informants were given pseudonyms to keep confidentiality. Interview locations varied, including the office of Community Development Council, the Tanayiku Park area, personal businesses, and informant homes. There existed a gender difference concerning the way I interviewed informants. Most interviews with female informants were unstructured, casual discussion, while most interviews with male informants were formal and prearranged.

**Participant Observation**

In addition to conducting arranged interviews, I conducted participant observation during the ten weeks of fieldwork in various sites. I made daily visits to the offices of Tanayiku Park and of Shan-Mei Community Development Council and the park recreation area, which provided a sense how various organizations function. I interacted with local residents in church activities, casual gatherings in neighborhoods, and informal discussions with park employees. In addition, I provided temporary voluntary assistance as a Tanayiku Park receptionist or as a tavern waitress. My work was facilitated through participating in an academic conferences on environmental issues outside the community, attending board meetings, ward meetings, and joining receptions for visitors including researchers, administrative officials, and media. These observations built the foundation to understand the nature of the community, and to discover and investigate related issues of how ecotourism development affected the local community. Furthermore, they provided insights
to compare my perspectives with those of leaders and residents of the community.

Document Review

Some demographic data and ecological terminology used in this study come from the government and academic database of Taiwan. Another source of data for this study was documents provided by Shan-Mei Community Development Council, including annual accounting reports, board-meeting reports, promotional brochures and videos concerning the ecotourism project, accounts of special events in the community, results of previous research, and proposals for related projects on tourism and community planning.

Analytical Method

The synthesis presented in this study is based primarily on the analysis of ethnographic data from recorded interviews and participant observations. Coding was first applied to categorize data in order to draw general themes. Quotations in this study are drawn from interview transcripts and memos of personal communications. Brief case studies are used at complementary intervals to provide more understanding of contextual background. Beyond descriptive analysis, charts and tables were also consulted along with statistics.
derived from documents to develop a comprehensive picture of significant trends and social changes.

Reasons for Conducting Qualitative Research

There were several reasons why I conducted qualitative research for this study. First of all, the focus of qualitative research on particular contexts and on the processes occurring in these contexts makes it especially suitable for understanding the emic views of participants in a community setting. Secondly, as the subject is an aboriginal community, the people involved are part of the reality that I am trying to understand; in such a case, qualitative research facilitates understanding of the meanings the participants use to make sense of their behaviors and social events. Another advantage of qualitative research lies in its ability to develop causal explanation through illustrating the processes that lead to tangible outcomes. Participant observation is effective in a community setting, especially in the context of another culture. Semi-structured interviews not only provided flexibility, but also encouraged conservative Tsou informants to open up more easily.

Limitations

Different from what I planned before going into the field, I decided not to conduct a random survey of local perception of ecotourism and its
induced social changes. My lack of sufficient rapport with all residents in the community was the primary reason for not doing the survey. There were several reasons for this lack of rapport. First, as the circumstances in the field were far more complex than expected, I found that two-months were not long enough for me to get a sense of what kind of questions and which measurement of attitudes would yield meaningful answers. Second, my inability to speak the native Tsou language made it hard to communicate well with older and more underprivileged residents. As the seven wards were dispersed geographically, I was unable to visit and spend time in every ward to get acquainted with those who did not actively participate in Tanayiku Park and other community affairs. Thus, people I contacted most often were those who either worked or were involved more actively in community affairs. I also experienced difficulties contacting and interviewing young males, because they usually worked outside the village during the daytime, and were too shy to talk to me. Only after half way through the fieldwork did I have a chance to contact a larger variety of residents through church gatherings, ward meetings, weddings, and other occasions. I gave up the idea of the survey fearing that the result might be misrepresentation. Instead, I stratified local residents by gender, age, ways of involvement, and interest groups, and interviewed representative individuals from each group hoping to achieve both the breadth of representation and depth of analysis.
Chapter 5
Ecotourism In Economic and Social Life

The ecotourism project in Shan-Mei has not only prospered, but also has been interwoven deeply in the economic and social fabric of the community. This chapter presents the current situation and chronicle stages of Tanayiku ecotourism development, followed by an analysis of how the ecotourism interacts with the economy, the culture, and community development in Shan-Mei.

The Current Situation of Ecotourism Development

Since the impact of tourism development is contingent upon the conditions under which tourism is developed in the community, I will briefly introduce four sets of conditions prevailing in Shan-Mei:

1. The operation of Tanayiku Park. The park opens from eight in the morning to five in the evening all year long. Tickets on weekends are $ 2.98 (NT. 100)\(^8\) for adults, $1.79 (NT. 60) for children fifteen and under, and $2.38 (NT. 80) for a party of thirty or more. On weekdays the price of all tickets is reduced by twenty NT. Extra charges for parking are $1.49 (NT. 50) per car, $0.59 (NT 20) per motorcycle; parking for tour buses is free. Beverages and deli food are sold by vendors both in the market place plaza and dispersed locations beside the scenery loop.

\(^8\) The currency exchange rate as of May 27, 2001 is: 1USD= 33.50 TWD.
2. Tourism in the economic and social life of Shan-Mei. Tanayiku Park has been initiated and managed by the local people since 1985, and is a main source of cash revenue for the Shan-Mei Community Development Council. Most of the local people involved with ecotourism regard tourism as an important, though secondary source of income. Some locals get no direct benefit or income from tourism.

3. The structure of the tourist industry. The growth of tourism has been slow in spite of increasing tourist interest, and tourist operation has been under local control for the most part. Tourists going to the park are sightseers instead of vacationers; they usually come for short visits, ranging from a couple of hours to at most two or three nights, to see and experience rather than to engage in leisure activities. Tourists come either as couples, families, or in groups of about fifty people with trips managed by national or county travel agencies. Once in a while groups of Japanese tourists visit Tanayiku Park as part of the packaged Mt. A-Li Tour, through a large international travel agency owned by a Taiwanese entrepreneur. Although outside travel agencies bring in significant numbers of tourists, they do not own or operate any tourism-related facilities at Shan-Mei.

4. The nature of interaction between tourists and native people. Most tourists visit the park in either on their own, or in organized groups led by an outside tourist guide. Some tourists hire local interpretive guides beforehand. There are an average of ten such cases per month. Most tourists spend less than a day in the community. A few vacationers stay for two to three days. The small
scale of Tanayiku Park and its geographical separation from the dispersed residential wards, means that host-guest interaction, most of the time, is limited to that between tourists and local employees or vendors inside the park area.

Stages of Tourism Development

Visitors with a vision of an intact ecotourism paradise surely would be surprised by the dynamics and diversity of Tanayiku Park. Rather than a wilderness area with limited intervention, there are many human activities involved in the ecotourism project, including local commerce, cultural performances, and vibrant mass tourism. "We have done planning for ecotourism several times, and we are still planning some ongoing projects now; but, you know, sometimes things just did not go in the way we planned, though we are clear about the overall direction, and have kept it on track, fortunately", noted Chin, the manager of Tanayiku Park. With and without planning, the development of Tanayiku Park has gone through three stages that shape the current multi-faceted tourism. In the first stage, a community park was built as a conservation project to protect the gu-yu in Tanayiku Creek; in the second stage, the park opened to the public and gradually developed into a combination of nature tourism and ethnic tourism; and in the third stage, Tanayiku ecotourism has become a part of integrated community development.
First Stage (1985-1995)- Protecting Our Creek and Fish

When asked about the initiative of developing ecotourism, various informants told different stories of how the project got started. The main difference among these stories is one of whether the motivation was to conserve the stream ecology and the surrounding environment, or to become better off economically. Mayor Kao (mayor of Shan-Mei village), a pioneer and leading advocate of the ecotourism project, described the background of community decision-making as we looked down the Tanayiku gorge from a scenic viewpoint:

Tanayiku Creek and the Tsuen-wen River back in my childhood was so beautifully intact; it was abundant with flocks of fish, shrimp and was a great place for local people to swim, play, or take a bath. See that mountain out there? We call it ‘Sang sang bin yu’, which means the mountain of orchid because of those beautiful wild orchids all over it. As the Japanese came in, followed by the Han people, they started logging the original camphor trees, destroyed the forest ecosystem, and turned it into economic plantation of bamboo wood and tea trees. When the Nationalist Party ruled, more and more logging trucks hauled precious wood away, and left our forest almost barren. Did we report it to the government? Sure, but it’s no use at all; the Bureau of Forestry is corrupted with those mountain rats, you know?!

The original forest ecosystem was exploited, and the replacement commercial plants have very little effect in maintaining water and soil conservation, and that’s how the degradation of our environment started here in Shan-Mei. Since Mt. A-Li Highway has been constructed, it has brought more and more outsiders coming in to fish or hunt. Many budu came here conducting illegal fishing and hunting for highly profitable sales, and it’s not fair at all that they never received any punishment for their crime!

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9 “Mountain rat” is slang in Taiwan, referring to illegal timber loggers.

10 Budu means “Han Chinese” in native Tsou language; locals used it while using mandarin for the rest of conversation or narrations.
Since we couldn’t rely on such dysfunctional government, which I think is corrupted with capitalists, we had to do something ourselves to save our inheritance from nature. We owed responsibility to nature and our future generations!

He continued addressing the motivation of preserving Tanayiku from another angle:

Besides the ideal of protecting nature, there’s a practical reason for doing so as well. As a minority, I saw how much our community suffered from economic repression for such a long time. Living in this low elevation area makes it hard to benefit from agriculture like luxury fruit crops as some other indigenous communities do, or like the tea harvest, even if we are located in the Mt. A-Li area.

As for the idea of ecotourism, Mayor Kao attributed it to a special experience earlier in his life:

I happened to have the chance to visit a natural conservation park in South Africa while I was a sailor, and the idea of turning a natural resource into ecotourism inspired me a lot. We couldn’t compete with *budus* in many ways, but we do own beautiful and intact scenery! Back then, I tried to convince all locals that Shan-Mei’s natural resources are our blessing if we could develop ecotourism and use the revenues to do community development. This would be our last chance to revive our community.

Another informant Yang, who belongs to one of the traditionally elite families living in seventh ward, held a different perspective:

The Tsou culture we possess here is the most precious resource of Shan-Mei.... most of our traditions have been taken away since Western religion came in; for example, Presbyterian Christianity\(^\text{11}\) - the denomination of Mayor Kao. These days I can say that only we in the seventh ward still practice the traditional millet ceremony and hunting. Environmental conservation is just a small, single dimension, and its development is short; we should take our cultural property as the center of tourism development.

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\(^\text{11}\) The Presbyterian Church is the most popular denomination of Christianity among all aboriginal communities in Taiwan, and it is well known for its longtime political support for the Democratic Progressive Party (the current ruling party).
Anyway, traditional Tsou culture is the most unique attraction for tourists, and local people should be clear about this point.

Yang is typical of a group of local leaders. Regarding the development of Tanayiku Park, they prioritize tourism development first; for them, environmental conservation or cultural preservation were elements added into the agenda later on.

Regardless of the different versions of the beginning of the ecotourism project, all informants did mention in one way or another that they missed the good old days when rivers were clear and full of fish. Accompanying this memory is nostalgia about collective fishing and how much all the community members enjoyed it. An elder, with approval of a group of his companions said:

Most people here, especially aged from forty to sixty like me, missed the old days when we Tsou respected and took care of our common property, like Tanayiku. In our culture, we not only educate through the generations about the ideas of environmental conservation and its necessity, but we also use collective restraints to manage individual behavior.

Several local leaders first formed a discussion group about tourism development back in 1985. This group turned into a committee of tourism research and planning two years later. The community’s first significant move was the collective decision of "phon-hsi" (closing the stream) made in a village meeting in 1989. The term "phon-hsi" refers to the actions and regulations they had imposed to prohibit any activities on a specific section of Tanayiku Creek at specific time period; it meant a lot to locals as a symbol of their

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12 An official village meeting is held once per year, normally in early December.
successful conservation effort based on strong consensus. The community started its conservation project with a village regulation on fishing, and recruitment of a conservation team. Organized by Mayor Kao, the conservation team first consisted of volunteers from the youth group of the Presbyterian Church. Later they were joined by many other local residents. The conservation team served as community rangers to guard the preserved Tanayiku Creek. One person was on duty in the daytime, and two at night. The project worked out very well and built a strong base both for the environmental conservation and for the unity of the community. Looking back at that time, several informants recalled the strong sense of consensus and sharing that was strengthened through their collaborative efforts, and they referred to this as a time of "revival of Tsou tradition". One middle-aged female said:

I remembered almost every single night friends or relatives of the people on duty would bring some snacks with a little bit of wine to make fellowship, and chatted and sang all night long. That was really a precious time for us. There was a sense of family; the community was like a big family.

Several other informants had similar memories; all of them emphasized how great it was to have the traditional sense of community back again, and regretted that it had faded gradually over the last couple of years. A thirty-year old woman commented: "I like the way Tanayiku was at that time better than it is now. Since we didn't have any support from the government, we villagers built the trails with wood, and several kiosks with thatched roofs along the

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13 Later the community successfully lobbied the Chia-i county government to announce an official Administration Act to prohibit fishing in support of the phon-hsi.
loop”. The few pictures taken at that time show that Tanayiku looked like a natural paradise that fit the stereotypical image of an aboriginal place.

The group of local leaders who tried to assess the possibility of developing ecotourism at the very beginning perceived several competitive advantages for Shan-Mei. One of the leaders said:

We were relatively intact, less exploited than neighboring villages; our farming areas, our residential areas, and the Tanayiku Park area were all separate; and Tanayiku Creek had supreme water quality for fish habitat. The most important thing is that we all knew that we didn’t want the bad tourism that happened in other indigenous areas, in which all benefits go to the outside capitalists, and local people are offered only low-class, low-income jobs such as servants of tourists. We want dignity, and we want to be the masters of our own community.

Without any support from outside, Shan-Mei’s residents decided to rely on themselves and started doing the construction of the road, trails, booths, and the management station for the opening of Tanayiku Park in 1995.

Second Stage (1995 -2000)- Ecotourism and Ethnic Tourism

In January 1995, Shan-Mei opened Tanayiku Park to the public with a charge of 75 cents per person, and named it Tanayiku Natural Conservation Park. During the first year, the manager of the Tanayiku Park remembered that incoming visitors knew the park by word-of-mouth, and were mostly nature connoisseurs, or members of Jeep Clubs. The condition of the road was challenging for non-four-wheel drive cars, which limited access by a ordinary automobile. What brought Tanayiku ecotourism on the stage was the “Formosa Gu-yu Festival” held on June 20, 1996. Receiving both financial aid and project
consulting from Taiwan’s number one newspaper, *China Times*, this successful hallmark event proclaiming “the wisdom of indigenous ecological knowledge” made the ecotourism project highly visible and popular. The festival drew attention to the aboriginal heritage of Shan-Mei and introduced the idea of cultural marketing by staging several thematic events such as a traditional dance performance, the tasting of Tsou food, and a local farmers market for visitors. For the first time having a chance to present their culture in the local setting, the community was amazed by the enthusiastic response from the visitors.

A government-sponsored tour visiting Mainland China at 1997 gave local leaders additional motivation to integrate their culture into ecotourism. The chance to experience the prosperous ethnic tourism of Yunnan and Guizhou minorities in China inspired Shan-Mei leaders. They realized that the quaintness of aboriginal culture could make Shan-Mei more attractive, and that dance performances would create significant new job opportunities for local people.

Gin, the current coordinator of the performance group noted:

> Our community already had an informal dance group at that time, so it was not really a big deal for us to set up the dance performances in Tanayiku Park; we only needed to reorganize the group, decide the content and length of the performance, and that’s pretty much all. You see, we are not the most famous village in Tsou, and we actually don’t have very special scenery to stun the tourists, so we had to add something that made us unique. Besides, ritual dances have always been a very significant element in Tsou culture; thus we could let outsiders know our culture better through the performance...it’s a good thing.

Since the beginning of 1998 Tanayiku Park has regularly staged the traditional Tsou dance and ritual performance every weekend without additional charge. This has indeed become a quite famous attraction by itself, especially for group tourists. Normally the performance lasts one hour with the last ten minutes set
aside for audience participation. According to my field observations, the performance contained four parts: a brief introduction of Shan-Mei’s cultural history and Tsou traditional costumes, a condensed depiction of an “initiation ceremony” for males who have reached the age of eighteen, dances of two of the most important rituals— the warfare ceremony (*mayasvi*) and the millet harvest celebration (*homeyaya*)— and the A-Mei dance. A-Mei is the largest indigenous group in Taiwan. Unlike most other groups that live in the mountains, they are located along the coastal plain of eastern Taiwan; their renowned joyful dances and folksongs have long been appreciated by Han Taiwanese, and the Han regard them as representative of the carefree and optimistic attitude of aboriginal people. This widely perceived image was developed into a strategy. The dance coordinator Gin phrased it:

We started to add the A-Mei dance this year (2000), because many tourists complained that Tsou dance is too serious and slow for entertainment; but you know, this is the nature of our culture, it’s impossible to change it, so we tried to provide a more relaxed, fun experience by performing a short section of more cheerful A-Mei dance, and actually it’s quite popular.”

**Third Stage (1999-2000)-The Age of Mass Tourism**

The landscape of Tanayiku Park development was changed by one influential factor: the influx of mass tourism starting from the fall of 1999, with the completion of the paved road running through Shan-Mei community straight to the gateway of Tanayiku Park. The manager of the park, Chin, told me that “new road made the park accessible for large tour buses, and thus brought us more and more group tourists ....also, I think because the 1999 earthquake
damaged many tourism areas on the island, and thus those mass tourists turned
to less affected sites like here.” The prevailing mass tourism in Tanayiku Park
grew almost two fold in 1999-2000. During the summer there were three to five
tour buses on weekdays and ten to twenty buses on weekends. Except for
groups from educational institutions or community organizations, mass tourists
coming in those large buses usually stayed less than three hours, seldom
stopping for a meal in the park. According to the information provided by the
Tanayiku office and my personal observation, the main interest of such mass
tourists groups was to see the performance; some of them would pay additional
fees for specially arranged performances on weekdays. Instead of eating in
Tanayiku Park or in two nearly local resorts, they usually went to big
restaurants on Mt. A-Li Highway that have contracts with outside tourism
agencies. This practice stems from collusion between agencies and facilitators
like transportation companies, hotels and restaurants. Manager Chin commented:
“ We don’t care so much about huge profits, so we can refuse to affiliate with
the coalition. Sometimes it’s not fair that those buses leave the noise and
polluted air here, and we are not the ones who really get the benefit”. In a
business sense, the aboriginal people knew they would never be able to compete
with aggressive budu merchants. Knowing that mass tourism did bring
significant, and still growing revenues to Tanayiku Park, most local residents
perceived an ongoing paradox. On one hand, they started to notice negative
impacts accompanying mass tourism, such as the disturbing pollution in the
environment, the threatened destruction of nature and the fish, and the arrogant
attitudes of some tourists; on the other hand, they developed new strategies, like
the expansion of their parking lot, a plan to open a restaurant inside the park, and the addition of sanitary facilities, in order to satisfy mass tourists and make them stay longer. The chief officer of the Community Development Council, Yanqiui explained: "If we have to absorb the bad of it (mass tourism), then we have to make more profit from it".

Tanayiku Ecotourism and Local Economy

Brief Economic History

Before the introduction of a cash economy during the age of Japanese Colonization, local people, like other Tsao tribes, lived as hunters and gatherers with little grain harvested for their own consumption. Later Shan-Mei combined a cash economy and subsistence economy, passively engaging for several decades in the capitalist system. Because of the low elevation, most of the valley is hot and humid and thus not suitable for planting luxury fruits like peach and pear, or high-priced vegetables such as alpine cabbages or raw wasabi, as done by other aboriginal tribes. Most people harvest various kinds of bamboos and beatonuts, both for their own consumption and for sale; many kinds of vegetables and domestication of chickens are seen in their backyards; hunting wildlife such as deer, goats, wild boars and flying squirrels, however, has gradually changed to more like a leisure activity.

For most families, sources of income, after the introduction of the cash economy and before tourism development, came from hourly-paid, seasonal
jobs related to farming or construction. Many villagers worked during the
harvest season for tea farms alongside the Mt. A-Li Highway to earn the highest
pay among all wage-labor jobs. Being attached to the cycle of the island
economy, Shan-Mei has experienced peaks and valleys in various industries. In
the late 1980s, some local residents started to operate their own tea farms in
areas around the first and the second wards. High profits gained from the tea
sales created an economic boom for those few owners. Then gradually,
especially in recent years, the profits slid fast following the earlier pattern of
bamboo and bea nuts. The unstable economy has been the greatest concern for
locals, especially with regard to financing their children’s education.

The opening of Tanayiku Park forced Shan-Mei to engage in the
island economy in a new way. Like tourism development elsewhere in the
world, it created job opportunities and new ventures for local, small
businesses/entrepreneurs. Direct job opportunities provided work at the
ecotourism site, employment at the community organization office, and hourly
jobs as dance performers and interpreters. At peak seasons or holidays such as
summers or Chinese New Year, some temporary jobs would be open to ease the
shortage of labor. Employees working at the park site included five guards, one
gardener, two clerks (including one temporary working only on holidays), one
janitor, and the Tanayiku Park manager. As for the Community Development
Council, there were two officers, one secretary, one accountant, and the chief
officer of the organization. Though the salary varied with each position, the
average was approximately four hundreds dollars per month, which was a good
income for living in a mountain village like Shan-Mei.
Local Business and its Relationship to Ecotourism

As Tanayiku ecotourism attracted more and more tourists, the number of local entrepreneurs grew relatively slowly. After ecotourism began in 1995, businesses run by locals included lodging, deli and drink service, and catering. There were two resorts both located less than two miles from Tanayiku Park providing lodging and dining. Five out of ten vendors of deli and drinks set up together in the covered merchant plaza inside the park, with the space and facilities/utilities provided free by the Community Development Council; four other vendors were dispersed along the looped trails operated by residents in the park area; the only vendor outside the park was a half mile away beside the bypass road. Almost every vendor provided popular deli food favored by tourists such as fried yam chips and fish, stir-fried native vegetables, bamboo shoot salad, and chicken soup with bamboo shoots. In hot and humid weather, traditional Taiwanese sweet and ice soup made with native materials like ai-yue or fen-yuan was served. Canned beverages which can be seen in any Taiwanese store were available as well. One new grocery store opened in 2000; it was located in the residential area of the seventh ward seven miles away from the Tanayiku Park.

The largest local businesses were the two resorts each having distinctive style. The elite Wen family owned the resort called "Mountain Beauty" with the capacity for 200 guests, and a chain of restaurants located both in the nearest city and along the Mt. A-Li Highway. Most of its business was
with group tourists, and it maintained good networking with domestic travel agents. The wall painting of traditional Tsou figures and Karoke in the dinning lounge combined Tsou quaintness and preferred entertainment for Han Chinese. The other resort called “Yiku Tavern”, shared the market in a quite different way. It operated like a Bed-and-Breakfast with a maximum of 70 lodgers. With an unusual all-wooden architecture and colorful gardening, it featured getting away from urban life, and provided gourmet espresso and music that often reminded visitors of a neat café in an urban area. Yiku tavern also featured weekend events such as making traditional Tsou dessert (gluey millet) and catching shrimp in the creek. Pin, the young owner of Yiku Tavern, who spent ten years studying in big cities, came back to Shan-Mei and started up this resort in 1998. She commented, “I think it’s the stereotype of aboriginal people that surprised many visitors. They usually ask me, how do I know these modern ideas of organic food, or espresso, or jazz.....etc. What they expect to see may be a bunch of less civilized locals with weird food and rice wine, I guess.” Another emerging business was a craft co-op built and operated by the first ward. Upon finishing construction the first ward residents held an open house for the whole community in September, 2000, but the co-op was not yet open to visitors, for it had not collected enough textiles and artifacts made by Shan-Mei locals, mostly first ward residents. Meanwhile, this new venture was seen by some locals as a way to make money, and at the same time preserve and revive local culture.
Cultural Dimensions of Tanayiku Ecotourism

The display of culture can be found in dance performances and architecture in Tanayiku Park. The schedule for traditional performances is twice-a-day on weekends and holidays at 10:30 am and 2:30 pm for free. On weekdays, visitors could request performance in advance with a charge of sixty dollars. Twenty native dancers dressed in traditional costumes perform excerpts of Tsou rituals and other folk dances accompanied by folksongs. The costumes are designed exclusively for dance performance according to the style of traditional clothes wore in rituals. The performance provides visitors a glimpse of Tsou culture with a sense of authenticity. A host, usually the manager of Tanayiku Park or the coordinator of the dance group, acts as a narrator, giving an introduction and commentary during the performance. The introduction normally includes the geography of Shan-Mei, the style of costumes, and the meaning of performed rituals. The manager of the Park said, “We not only provide the introduction to serve tourists’ curiosity, but also take this chance to educate them about us, about Tsou culture just as I did when I introduced the initiation ceremony.” In introducing the rite of passage for Tsou youths, he emphasized the original serious meaning of “wine drinking” and restrictions on it, followed by his advocacy of removing the stigma of ‘born drunks’ from aboriginal people. “This is a great chance to correct the outsider’s false ideas about our culture in an informal situation. Hopefully my little education will work”, he concluded.
Traditional dancing was performed in a square plaza designed particularly for it, with thatch-roofs and long aisles on two sides. Two adjacent bamboo houses built in traditional style faced the entrance of the plaza; one of them served as the back stage for dancers to prepare and rest before and during performance, and the other was originally designed as a model of a traditional Tsou residential house on display for tourists, but had been closed since late 1999. At one corner of the plaza stood a fig tree (*chui-rung*), the sacred tree of Tsou; it was believed that at the annual warfare ceremony (*mayasvi*), the God would go down through the tree using it as a ladder to attend the ritual. Every time before the start of this annual ritual, all branches and leaves of the tree should be clear-cut. Another sacred symbol at the plaza was a kind of orchid called "*mu-hieh-lan*"; this flower was also important in the warfare ceremony, for the God would use it to identify Tsou people. Although these two plants are of great importance in Tsou culture, there was no introduction of them to tourists during the performance, and many of Shan-Mei’s young people do not recognize the plants and their cultural meanings. Only the tourists who paid extra money to have interpreters would get the chance to know these cultural meanings.

The interpretive program constituted another focal dimension of cultural illustration in Tanayiku ecotourism. There are four interpreters and all were local residents; three were middle-aged men and one young man was in his thirties. Two of them spoke fluent Japanese, so they could guide Japanese

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14 The idea of “interpreter” comes from the National Park system in Taiwan. It refers to those who not only are hired to guide visitors around the Park area, but also to explain related geographical, ecological, and cultural information.
tourists. Visitors from educational or administrative institutions were most likely to request interpreters, and free interpretive service was provided for visiting government officials or media. The interpreter generally introduced and explained the local ecology and its underlying cultural meanings. Most of the time, interpretation would start with introducing the geographical and cultural background of Shan-Mei, the early conservation project, and the ideology of Tanayiku ecotourism. Then the interpreter would guide tourists to walk along the trail, talking about the plants and how local people utilized them. At the pool area, the interpreter gave a brief explanation of the ecology of gu-yu, and often yielded questions about fish in Tanayiku Creek. Stories about traditional hunting and fishing made reference to the cultural value of sharedness. These stories were told on the way back when passing by the big “rock of sharing”, where Tsou hunters used to stop on their return from hunting to distribute the meat to tribal members waiting there to welcome them. Each interpreter usually had his own narrative style and ideas about what he would like to convey to tourists. One interpreter specialized in ecological knowledge, and was able to talk not only about plants, but also about birds, butterflies, and details of gu-yu. Two of the interpreters preferred talking about traditions and the history of conservation since one of them was former mayor, and the other was former chief officer of the Community Development Council. The youngest interpreter was a dancer and usually dressed in traditional costumes, which made him more popular than the others. He would say more about the usage and meaning of plants related to their use in rituals.
The newly opened hunting studio in the seventh ward, and the handicraft studio in the first ward were expected to be additional cultural attractions in Shan-Mei. The hunting studio contained items selected for display by hunters and respected elders who served as consultants about traditional taboos and interpretations. The handicraft studio in the first ward contained items made either by the Elders’s Club or by the woman’s handicraft group. Funded by community development projects, the Elder’s Club is held every Tuesday and Thursday, a time when local residents over 60 years of age get together to learn and practice making traditional handicrafts. The women’s handicraft group is a more casual gathering of first ward female residents. Manufacturing activities of both groups were taken as byproducts; the most important purpose was for locals to enjoy the intra-group interaction and emotional closeness. A-Gui, the Board Chairman of Community Development Council, expressed his concern for careful development of cultural tourism.

It is good and important to have these two studios open to tourists; it should promote their understanding and respect for our culture. But we want to go slowly; we don’t want tourism to invade our lives, or take our culture only as meaningless, commercial products. After all, we must be the masters of our own community.

The Function of Tanayiku Ecotourism in Community Development

The Shan-Mei Community Development Council was launched in 1994 to take charge of tourism and conservation projects, including overseeing the administrative office of Tanayiku Park. As it shows in Chart 1, revenues from ecotourism made a great contribution to the finances of the Council,
though the percentage of that revenue declined recently as government aid had increasingly become a major source of income (Chart 2). After the community was given the annual award for the "Excellence in Integrated Community Development" by the national government, different kinds of aid from both national and local governments soared year after year. The significance of Tanayiku ecotourism is not solely economic; it allows the community to plan the full scope of integrated development with ecotourism as the starting point, and to attain helpful resources and assistance from outside in the name of Tanayiku ecotourism. A-Gui said, "Tanayiku speaks for our community to the outside world, and it always works effectively; but we as locals have known that Tanayiku is one part of our holistic development. Earning a lot of money is good and helpful, but is never the first priority of our community development". Tanayiku ecotourism facilitated the ideal of social welfare in community development. To practice the principle of sharedness valued by Tsou people, a large proportion of Tanayiku income was used to fund social welfare for community residents.
Chart 1: Annual Revenue from Tanaviku Ecotourism

Chart 2: Ecotourism Revenue versus Government Aid

Figure 6. Charts of Ecotourism Revenue and Gov. Aid
Welfare included living allowances for elders over 60, education assistance for students who were residents of Shan-Mei, financial aid for emergencies, and rewards for newly married couples and parents in hope of increasing the Tsou population. Mayor Kao said:

as we planned ecotourism development, we addressed social welfare and community revitalization in our vision statement; we hoped the success of ecotourism would make community residents better-off by providing social welfare and a self-sufficient economy. And now we have achieved some part of that goal.
Chapter 6
Discrepancy Between Ideal and Practice

The actual practice of ecotourism and the community development project are inconsistent with the community’s vision and superficial reports from outside sources. Discrepancies existed with respect to the operation of ecotourism, local participation in the ecotourism project, internal conflicts of interest, and the impact of the project.

Is It Ecotourism?

A graduate student majoring geography vented frustration after his visit to Tanayiku Park. “Is this really ecotourism? How could it be ecotourism without basic environmental awareness? Look at the fish! They are suffering from overcrowding and skin disease. The essence of ecotourism is about ecology, and it seems to me that the community doesn’t understand the ecology at all. I feel cheated!” The name “Tanayiku Natural Conservation Park”, and its association with a model of ecotourism, did not seem appropriate to some tourists. I heard many expressions of disappointment during my work. An informant told me about a group of Tayal community leaders who were interested in developing ecotourism for their people and came to visit couple months before I arrived. The leaders laughed at the ecotourism project and

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15 Tayal is the second largest indigenous group in Taiwan. Tayal culture is known as aggressive, and is relatively more egalitarian in social organization.
joked about it as "just like raising some fish in a pool." It did not make sense to them that the fish and the water in the conservation area were not as free as they were in their natural condition before ecotourism. The informant said, "I know that the Tayal are very different from our Tsao and that they look at things in a different way, but I guess I agreed to some extent with their criticism; what we show now is not totally the natural way." He continued giving me an example of how the local people used to poison some of the fish, using a traditional toxic plant to bring the fish population into equilibrium.

**Nature-based Tourism**

In contrast to the criticism from those who seek authentic ecotourism, there is a perception among many tourists that Tanayiku Park is merely a site of scenic beauty, a place for sightseeing and relaxation, and they have no intention to experience ecotourism. For most tourists, the clear creek and well-preserved fish ecology surprise them as an unusually intact natural scene out of the ordinary in modern Taiwan, not as a demonstration and education project about the importance of environmental conservation. As tourists enter the Tanayiku Park area, there is a one-floor admissions/access building housing the administrative office. This building is used for selling tickets, soft drinks and fish food. Sometimes it serves as simple information center. A big explanatory sign posted outside the building at the entrance of the loop trails gives geographical information about Tanayiku Park. A pile of brochures rests inside the office to be given out only by request. Written in Mandarin Chinese, the
brochures show seven snapshots of Tanayiku scenery including the swing bridge, the trail, a shimmering school of fish, and two traditional food vendors. Following the pictures was a map of the park area (see Figure 7), lists of tickets and services, a transportation directory, and a brief introduction to the development of Tanayiku Park. The brochure does not explain anything about ecotourism or the ecology of the fish, or the Tanayiku environment. A few tourists would come to a receptionist in the office or an on-duty guide standing close to them and ask for more details about ecotourism and Tsou culture; they would get a better sense of ecotourism and its connection with Shan-Mei through this direct interaction with locals. Most tourists did not have the chance to decipher misleading messages, and thus Tanayiku Park meant nothing more than a beautiful gorge with large amount of fish.

*The Absence of Interpretation*

Yanqui, the chief officer of the Community Development Council, noted that an ecologist suggested setting up explanatory signs along the trails to provide visitors information about the Tanayiku ecosystem and the project to preserve the environment. However, the leaders did not take this suggestion. Tanayiku ecotourism focuses more on developing the interpretive program staffed by trained local guides. There is no other such program in Taiwan outside the national parks. With the charge of 30 US dollars per hour, which is comparatively high, the interpretive program has floundered since it started in late 1999. Still the locals were reluctant to convey more detailed messages other
Figure 7. The Brochure Map of Tanayiku Park
than through receptionists and creek guides. Yanṇui explained that the local people were too shy and introverted. She referred to shyness as a Tsou cultural trait. "The concept of environmental conservation is more like a natural thing for us; we know that from traditional practices like fishing and hunting and from lessons passed downed by the elders, and we know it's true because we observe nature in our lives. However, most of us are not as good at telling stories as Mayor Kao; it's hard to explain those things to outsiders".

The Decline of Local Participation and Decreasing Involvement

The impression of strong consensus and high participation in Shan-Mei is widely shared by outsiders and these truths are praised by the media, attracting numerous researchers to study this unusual community. Media reports and some research describe Shan-Mei as "utopia", a long-lasting ideal in Chinese culture. The locals had formed strong consensus on the development of Tanayiku Park partly because they expected a better future, and partly because they felt obligated to revive their environment back to what it used to be, back to what "our ancestors had left for us".

Declining participation and decreasing involvement was the subject of complaint by leaders in Community Development Council, and by local people. Several leaders, including the chief officer Yanṇui, and the secretary Naau, who had most direct contacts with local residents, gave similar critiques of the growing selfishness, individualism, and utilitarianism among community members. They felt that people in the community became concerned about
personal benefit more than collective welfare. Blaming the utilitarian effect of cash economy and Han culture, an elder leader complained that most local residents refuse to give without receiving something in return. “They lost the belief that individual advantage must be supported by the advantage of the entire community. They forgot the virtue of mutual aid and of the priority of the collective over individuals. How sad!” Another frustration for leaders was the lack of willingness of people to run businesses such as renting strollers in the park. Sometimes they complained about the irresponsible attitudes of Tanayiku Park employees. “The community gives so many good opportunities for local people to become better off economically, to be more independent, and they just don’t know how to appreciate it; we have no idea why are they so passive and lazy.”

Loosening The Tie with Tanayiku Ecotourism

Local residents gave several reasons for their decreasing involvement. First, they felt an emotional detachment due to the absence of Tanayiku Park in the context of everyday life. Many mentioned the isolated location of Tanayiku Park. The inconvenient access prevented them from becoming actively involved. Though the park is always free and open to the local residents, people living in the first, second, and seven wards were too far away; it took them more than fifteen minutes by motorcycle to get to Tanayiku Park. With respect to making a living, most locals either farmed fields far away from Tanayiku, or did part-time jobs in construction or tea harvesting along Mt. A-li Highway twenty miles
up the mountain from Shan-Mei. When local people considered swimming, playing, or even fishing, they would rather go to creeks nearby instead of Tanayiku. A few informants noted the issue of privacy; tourists in Tanayiku Park made them feel uneasy, and not like they were "natives" anymore. One elder told me that he really missed the taste of gu-yu, since he could only dream about eating it after the ban on fishing in the conservation project. They regarded Tanayiku as another community, and found the wards in which they lived more comfortable.

Second, the dissatisfaction of not receiving significant benefits in return also contributed a lot to the enlarging disconnection. During the beginning stage of Tanayiku development, leaders articulated the common goal of the community: to develop ecotourism to improve everyone’s life. The leaders guaranteed that everyone would get a share of the benefits. Tanayiku ecotourism has gradually generated more and more revenues, but most of them have been used for the general social welfare of the community, and to pay the expenses of employees of the Community Development Council. While the social welfare system is one of the well-known institutions of Shan-Mei, many local residents receive no benefits, which are given only to those who suffer illness or death, those who undergo great financial difficulties, or those who plan to marry. Under this circumstance, most locals desire a more direct benefit rather than an insured system.

Third, the role of the ward head (lin-chang) was another factor mentioned by some informants. The ward head has played an important role in bridging the gap between community leaders and local residents ever since the
official administrative system was imposed on Shan-Mei. An influential informant in local politics acknowledged that the key to success for a village leader in local affairs has always been determined by effective networking with the seven ward heads. The ward heads function like "hands and feet for the head". Ann, the former board chairman commented,

The only chance of gathering all local people together is at the annual village meeting, and sometimes good and thorough communication is hard because we have seven wards scattered quite far from each other. Also, ward heads are closely affiliated with the Community Development Council; they are invited and encouraged to attend monthly board meetings in the hope that they could assist us to bring messages back to every ward. Thus, you can see the role of ward heads is very important for good community development.

Observing both board meetings and ward meetings reaffirmed to me the significance of ward heads as mediators. Ward meetings were called by individual ward heads usually after a board meeting. The normal procedure began with acknowledging important resolutions made in the board meeting, followed by residents' discussion. Then the ward head invited open comments or proposals on ward or community affairs. Conclusions reached in the meeting were conveyed to leaders, whether of the official administrative system or the Community Development Council, by the ward head. With neighbors chatting and joining in the conversations, the ward meeting allowed everyone to have a say about public affairs in an encouraging atmosphere. Meanwhile, the effectiveness of such a process depended heavily on the leadership of the ward head. The more provocative and communicative the ward head, the more fruitful the participation and feedback. This communication channel malfunctioned in regard to Tanayiku ecotourism. Residents became discouraged
about participating, and the ward heads were incapable of reversing this trend.

Being influential in micro politics and the social network system was not enough; once the ward head did not function well, the two-way communication of important decisions concerning village affairs broke down and resulted in an inability to build ideological consensus and facilitate cooperation in various community projects.

**Difficulties of Making Money in Tanayiku Ecotourism**

Some residents ceased their involvement because they found it time-consuming and difficult to make money. One man who tried to run a deli business in Tanayiku Park and gave up after a short time commented:

It's not because we are too lazy to run businesses in Tanayiku, it's more than that. We lived in second ward and we had to carry everything there, including facilities and raw materials everyday; and you know that the Tanayiku Park office didn't provide a refrigerator in the marketplace, plus it was hard to estimate the number of tourists, so we ended up either throwing lots of food away, or ran out of things while doing business. After a while, we found it too costly, and we were exhausted, and decided to give up.

I surveyed the current seven vendors in the park, and surprisingly found that only one was not from the third and fourth wards, which were the closest residential areas to Tanayiku Park. The exception was from the first ward.

Many informants blamed the temperament of Tsou, being introverted, for making it difficult for most local residents to do business successfully. The must-do marketing and socializing in a vendor business made them feel exposed
and embarrassed. Naau, who spent couple years studying outside Shan-Mei, commented that many locals were too afraid of changes and new things, and that this may explain their being hesitant to own vendor businesses in the Park. Locals presume that business is complex, tough “budu stuff”. A local youth shared his opinion:

We are too honest for business; you have to know how to boast about your products, and how to convince people to buy them even after they reject your offer, or criticize your products. See, rejections and criticisms always make me feel so embarrassed, and stop me from soliciting business. I think budus are better at this, because they are more outspoken, and sometimes cunning, like Mrs. Lin at the grocery store.

Working as a Tanayiku Park employee is another way of making money directly from tourism, and needs no capital. Leaders of tourism planning hoped to attract more young people to work and stay in the community, but they found it tougher than they expected. The main problems were the insufficient number of jobs and the not-so-decent salaries. Moreover, due to the principle of equal opportunity, most jobs in Tanayiku Park required rotation every six months or yearly. Thus Tanayiku Park was not able to provide either stable or staple jobs for most local youth. Young men who had to support their families had no choice other than to find jobs in big cities or to work in part-time jobs as before. Rather than feeling the corruption of utilitarianism, local people attributed the decline of participation to loss of confidence in the once-believed vision of a better living promised by ecotourism development.
Internal Conflict of Interest and Fragmentation

In contrast to the widely held view of Shan-Mei as a harmonious, peaceful, indigenous community, Shan-Mei, like any other places on earth, has its share of conflict and fragmentation. Internal politics has been a significant factor in the dynamics of community development. As a small, unstratified society, Shan-Mei had no chief or other single leader. Influential families affiliated with traditional elite lineages including Wen, Chung, Ann and Yan, constantly competed for influence in community affairs. Under the official local administrative system, the village mayor is the top position. Other influential positions include township (hsiang) representative, the Board Chairman, the Board of Directors and the Board of Advisors in the Community Development Council. In the initial stage of ecotourism development, the incorporation of the elite families played a key role in determining the success of the conservation project, because they agreed to release their own sectional property rights to Tanayiku Creek. A member of one elite family and one of the initial leaders in the conservation project explained the historical fabric to me:

At the beginning, every party was dedicated to the common good of Shan-Mei, especially the Ann family; their eldest son contributed so much to mediate among those families and persuade them to let the community take charge of Tanayiku. But now what? Most of them only care about how to get an influential position, and then utilize it to strengthen their power in local politics! Those men are all alike; they all desire power, status, and wealth, you know. Compared to them, female leaders are much more inclined to devote themselves to community development for its own sake.
Change in the Locus of Power

During the summer of 1999, a big scandal erupted and led to significant changes in the locus of power and the organizational culture of the Community Development Council. At that time, Mr. Wen was the Board Chairman of the Community Development Council. He was from one of the elite families and was well known for his social skills and good relationships with county officials. The scandal broke when he was asked to resign by Board of Directors because of huge financial corruption. An informant who was previously involved with the Community Development Council commented: "We had known it for a long time, actually, and we had tried to negotiate with him about that, as we hoped things would get resolved in private, and thus he could save his face and reputation. He has real leadership capabilities, and it's really a pity that he ruined his career like that." As corruption and other internal conflict were on people's minds, informants tended to bring up such matters voluntarily during my last month of fieldwork. Mr. Wen's unusual charisma and leadership position enabled him to bring many resources needed for development into the community, which was unusual for a small indigenous village like Shan-Mei. What made him controversial was his way of exercising political hegemony and economic monopoly, despite Community Development Council regulations and moral constraints. The fact that he used his position to advance his private business and personal wealth became widely known, and the broken alliance with other local leaders led to his forced resignation. Another informant described what happened:
We as officers started to doubt his tricks, especially the money stuff, but at first many Board members and local residents did not have a clue about what was happening. When he resigned last summer, we still kept the dirty secret inside the group of committee leaders instead of announcing it in front of Shan-Mei villagers. It was too embarrassing!

The resignation event had a multiple impact on the political landscape of the community. First, the friction between two parallel political systems was eliminated. Previously the village mayor (still Mayor Kao at that time) was an advocate of ideal sustainable development, and a loyal Democratic Progressive Party member. The chairman Mr. Wen had developed his career in the typical way of the Nationalist Party. The difference between these two leaders had led to policy inconsistency as well as an ongoing fight over leadership in community affairs. One informant explained:

It was not only a conflict between those two; it was also about which side other leaders would like to take. Mayor Kao was less powerful, because he was more idealistic and playing politics was not his style; and probably he was not good at it; when he dealt with political and public affairs issues, I feel that he was like a preacher.

Political change after the resignation was observed also in the fact that Mayor Kao had become target of media interviews, the primary host for visitors and the spokesperson who articulated the conservation vision of Shan-Mei. Previously he had not played these roles though he had already been the village mayor for a couple of years before 1999. Naau said:

Locals in Shan-Mei all respected him, and credited his sacrifice and effort by making him mayor, but before the corruption, I guess most villagers took Mr. Wen more as the head of Shan-Mei. This may be the reason why after he was dismissed from the Council, the community became peaceful, because serious conflicts among elite leaders disappeared. The present Board Chairman is more aligned with Mayor Kao. But at the same time, I feel that we are not used to not having a strong leader like Mr. Wen.
Another informant added his guess that Mr. Wen had been more influential than Mayor Kao among local residents because of his traditional elite background.

_Land-use Conflict_

Under the surface of the new peaceful situation, problems and minor conflicts were still occurring. Local residents gossiped about the declining business of the Mountain Beauty restaurant, which might have been related to the misfortunes of the owner Mr. Wen. An unusual outbreak of land-ownership conflicts arose inside the Park area, and a controversial plan for a restaurant proposed by Mayor Kao were also on people's minds. The chief officer Yanqi predicted, "This is like a transition period, and everything seems so fuzzy; it might get better and clearer after the next election of all board members and staff."

Another kind of internal conflict resulted from disputes over land ownership. The system of private property introduced into the community freed the allocation of land use from lineage control. Land then became a source of capital accumulation for individuals through the sale of ownership or the generation of rent. As most parts of the Tanayiku area were privately owned, the community had to rent some of them to build parking lots and other facilities. During my fieldwork, the community initiated a discussion about extending the parking lot to solve the overcrowding problem on weekends and holidays. The Community Development Council contacted one of the landowners, asking to rent more land for the parking lot project; the owner
surprised them by requesting a dramatic increase in rent both for old and new land rentals. Although the behavior of the landowner irritated many local people, and he was criticized as “selfish”, and “utilitarian”, all parties knew that the owner had a legal right to increase the rent, even though it might be morally incorrect. The owner already had a bad reputation for placing priority on profit making, as he had accumulated a large amount of money over past few years by operating a successful vendor business in the park, and collecting other revenues from renting land. One informant commented,

We all knew that he made a lot of money and thus owned a nice house and car, but many people dislike him because he didn’t care about the collective. He is too individualistic.

An older leader on the Community Development Council said, “We start to worry that if other local people try to do the same thing, like clamming their rights against the community, then it would be difficult to have good community development. Not everything in modern society is good, and worth learning. If everyone only thinks of their own benefit and does not sacrifice at all, how are we going to achieve the prosperity of the whole community?”

The chapter has explained the problems of Shan-Mei ecotourism in terms of the lack of attention given to the educational purpose of ecotourism, the hidden factors of decreasing local involvement, and internal fragmentation caused by resource-use conflict. These factors have not been addressed either by the community or by outside observers.
Threats to the ecotourism and community development in Shan-Mei appear in various ways, as discussed below.

Crisis of Conservation - the Exploitation and Destruction of Nature

A few days after a huge typhoon hit the island in late August 2000, locals found that Tanayiku Creek remained muddy, which had never happened before. One special quality of Tanayiku Creek was its premium clear water, not normally affected by rain or a typhoon. Local people suspected that there might be illegal construction, or serious land slides near the bank upstream at the neighbor village. Mayor Kao explained, “The creek runs mainly through Li-Chia (the neighbor village) and Shan-Mei; as we are down stream, it is hard for us to keep an eye on what’s going on in Li-Chia.” Due to the unclear water condition and the difficulty of observing the fish, Tanayiku Park reduced the ticket price from N.T 100 to N.T 40 on the following weekend. Recalling how the whole community strived in 1996 to revive the endangered fish population and succeeded even after the most damaging typhoon, Mayor Kao emphasized that human exploitation was more destructive than a natural disaster. A -Gui agreed, “The current crisis is a sign of inappropriate operation and management, and it’s time for us to reexamine our direction.”
The Impact of Mass Tourism

Tanayiku Park began to experience other serious problems with the fish stock; abnormal white spots appeared on some of the fish, and injuries were evident because of overcrowding. As tourists can easily observe a large school of fish gathering to eat the fish food, the feeding is taken as a must-do when visiting Tanayiku Park. However, with the large and still growing influx of group tourists starting in late 1999, the over feeding of non-natural fish food by tourists has caused the skin disease and worsened injuries as swarms of fish rush for the food.

Moreover, mass tourism demands more and more construction of extended trails for the sake of safety, and parking lots and sanitary facilities to accommodate visitors on weekends. As more and more construction impacts the environment, some local residents started to worry about the decline of both the quantity and the diversity of nature species as they gradually lose their habitat. One informant questioned: “If Shan-Mei becomes more and more like the awful places where tourists live, why will they bother to come here?” Pin, the owner of the Yiku Tavern, also talked about her plan to make the tavern a recreation cottage for urban people, and to build a strategic affiliation with another emerging ethnic tourism village nearby. The environmental crisis made it risky for her business to depend solely on Tanayiku Park. She said, “It’s all too uncertain and fragile, just like the whole island.”

A visiting ecologist pointed out that some of the original local ecosystem was destroyed to please the tourists; for example, in order to make
Tanayiku Park more gardenlike, which is favored by many Han tourists, some original local plants alongside the trails were replaced with imported tropical flowers, for their colorful appearance and ability to attract butterflies. The ecologist explained the impact:

> Usually the case is that imported plants are too biologically aggressive, and would leave the displaced plants and related indigenous organisms no chance to survive, which is a very bad lesson for ecotourism. Ecotourism in Shan-Mei lacks ecological awareness and professional consulting.

**Bias in the Local Perception of Ecotourism**

Every local resident of Shan-Mei, regardless of gender or age, knew clearly that Tanayiku ecotourism started with the conservation project to protect the creek. Most of them did feel honored by the high reputation of their grass-roots environmental conservation effort. Yet, as A-Gui pointed out, the majority of locals did not understand the real meaning of ecotourism; instead, they tended to consider Tanayiku Park more in the sense of gaining economic advantage. Not being informed that environmental conservation is the inevitable essence and rationale of ecotourism, the local people were not motivated to continuously support conservation endeavors needed for Tanayiku Park. “We need more and better communication between our leaders and the villagers to educate and unite the entire community, to improve our ecotourism”, concluded A-gui.
Lack of Legitimacy of Resource Management

According to the Taiwanese Environmental Protection Agency, wilderness areas such as mountains, rivers, and some lands are public properties, and should be under the administration of either the national or local government. Although the Agency is assumed to spearhead the legislative and policy response to Taiwan's environmental problems, the terrain lands, the river, and the fish were under three distinct jurisdictions and three different administrative enforcement mechanisms. Under this chaotic situation, Tanayiku Creek, and the land of Tanayiku Park are public property owned by the government. Thus the actions taken by Shan-Mei to "close the river", to regulate fishing, and even to establish and operate Tanayiku Park strictly speaking are illegal, and can be reversed by the government at any time. Mayor Kao said:

The government should grant us title to land, rivers, and resources we have occupied for centuries; we know that we will take the best care of the environment here, because it is our home.

After receiving a warning and advice from professionals in law and public policy, Mayor Kao suggested to the Community Development Council the idea of organizing a discussion group in the community to recommend the adjustment of environmental regulations, and then convey them to the legislators and government administration. I consulted an outside attorney on this issue, and he suggested: "The community better hurry up to start the process. This will be a tough challenge for both the community and the

16 According to the special regulations for indigenous reserve lands, indigenous people can only exercise temporary tenure instead of ownership in land.
government, because the legal and the administrative system are not ready yet to enter an era of putting the environment ahead of economic development. But if local people don’t try to make it happen, it is risky too, for they would be vulnerable to an easy to attack if some parties plan to disrupt them.” It may be much more difficult than the community imagines to achieve recognition of their legal rights. The law is complex and the community lacks political power to initiate changes in public policies, because they are relatively marginalized from mainstream institutions.

Struggle For Autonomy

The awareness and capability of autonomous decision-making in local affairs is another element of the Tanayiku experience. Intellectual elites, leaders and most common people in Shan-Mei recognize themselves as being unique and different from other indigenous communities because of this characteristic, and they are very proud of it.

While emphasizing the notion of local autonomy, Shan-Mei still faces challenges to free self-expression which conflicts with tourists’ demands. In several aspects of host-guest interaction, local residents have made compromises, consciously and unconsciously, to satisfy recreational tourists, whose concern with genuine representation of culture is relatively low. Another challenge to local autonomy is not being given the authority to manage government funded construction projects in Tanayiku Park, which has resulted in much controversy.
Performance of A-Mei dance and Geisha Show

Besides the traditional Tsao singing and dancing excerpted from the warfare and millet harvest ceremonies, the ethnic dance performance in Tanayiku park also contains a short section of A-Mei dance, as mentioned earlier, and a show of cross-dressed Geisha performed by a local talented youth who had lived in Japan for three years. The reason for adding the non-Tsao performance, as the manager of Tanayiku park explained, was to strengthen the entertainment effect and enhance tourist satisfaction, particularly among group tourists. The live narration, usually accompanying the entire performance, informed the audience about the difference between A-Mei dance and that of the Tsao. After experiencing the more static, serious nature of Tsou dance, the narrator invited the audience to taste the joyful, cheerful A-Mei dance. Shaman Ann, the director of the dance group complained:

Sure, I constantly felt embarrassed; actually, some of our dancers proposed that they would rather innovate a new generation of Tsao dance than perform the dance of another ethnic group.

As for the Geisha show, the idea came from the trendy shows in metropolitan entertainment clubs, and it is the only part of the performance that the narrator does not explain. Although group tourists usually enjoyed the performance, including the non-Tsou additions, some individual tourists became irritated. Pin said, “Many of the Yiku Tavern guests complained about the inauthenticity of the performance, and criticized the gradual dilution of the genuine Tsou culture.”
Change in the Catering Menu

As more and more people all over Taiwan heard of Tanayiku Park, more people would call the office of the Community Development Council and ask about the directory, lodging, and restaurants. Normally, the receptionist would suggest the option of reserved catering provided locally for a group of ten visitors or more. Local people usually hosted visiting administrative officers, senators, doctors from the Christianity Hospital in Chia-i City, preachers, ...etc. by catering for them. The slogan was “Traditional Tsou Yummy Combo”, though most dishes typified the Han Chinese menu with some locally produced materials used as ingredients: for example, bamboo chicken soup, grilled boar, sautéed fish, fern or bamboo shoot salad, and bamboo baked rice. Local women who took care of catering said that at first they were passionate about making authentic, traditional Tsao food for all visitors, including tourists; however, many visitors complained about the “weird stuff” or “weird way of making food” such as glutinous banana cake, sticky millet, poached fish, creek shrimp, and various local vegetables. The caterers commented:

In fact, we don’t eat bamboo baked rice or grilled boar very often, but these are the best known foods to outsiders; tourists seem not to appreciate things that we consider the most traditional, like the millet, and pumpkin or banana desert.

While making compromises in serving general tourists and other visitors, local people continued to treat high-level officials, foreign visitors, or doctors from the Christianity Hospital with genuine Tsou food. They expressed the hope that by doing so, their diet, a part of Shan-Mei culture, would be experienced and appreciated, at least by a few understanding outsiders.
Inappropriate Government Involvement

At first, the development of Tanayiku ecotourism was solely a grass-roots initiative managed without government assistance or supervision. Mayor Kao recalled:

We tried to ask for help from the government, but as we explained our thinking about putting environmental conservation and economic development together through ecotourism, the officials regarded it as ridiculous and impossible, and thus refused to collaborate or to provide us any assistance.

However, things began to change after the conservation project had succeeded and further developed into ecotourism. To recognize and reward Shan-Mei for its achievement in conservation and community development, both central and local governments (Chia-i county) started to grant financial aid as well as technical assistance to the community. Usually government aid focused on several dimensions: construction of infrastructure, development of recreational agriculture, environmental improvements such as sanitary facilities or recycling systems, and general community development, including cultural projects such as the revival of traditional weaving, event planning for the annual gu-yu festival, and visits to other communities. Technical assistance was mostly provided for agricultural training and community planning. The chief officer of Community Development Council explained:

In community planning, there had been a couple of failed cases, and we didn’t like some of those project planners very much. They either stayed for only a short period of time, or didn’t interact with us often.
During my fieldwork, a project to reconstruct the trail was undertaken with special aid from the county government. The natural trail was covered with concrete pavement and sided with concrete railing disguised to look like bamboo. Incompatible features of the landscape included an inaccurate image of *gu-yu* in the fish sculpture at the Park entrance, and a kiosk in the style of the Chiang-Kai-Shek Memorial in the capital city Taipei. Funded by local government, the fish sculpture was made by outsiders who had no idea of what a *gu-yu* looks like; as a result, the stone fish had a puffy shape similar to the tilapia, a common market fish in Taiwan. The manager informed me that this misrepresentation had been criticized not only by some tourists, but also by some visiting experts and high-level government officials. Furthermore, a group of locals laughed and told me that they had been asked by many visitors about the bizarre existence of “Chung-Cheng Temple” in the park. Naau said:

> That is a really terrible misfit, but we have no control over it, because most government aid projects are subcontracted to outside builders who are authorized to bring their own workers and facilities to our community and do things all in their own way.

Tanayiku Park vendors often complained about the builders. They failed to keep the surrounding area clean, were inconsiderate, and caused lots of inconvenience to vendor businesses. “They are selfish and disruptive”, stated a vendor, who normally was not so opinionated. Relying heavily upon government aid, particularly with respect to the high-cost of construction of infrastructure, the community faced the dilemma of either getting things done

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17 This phrase refers to the famous national monument named after former president Chian-Kia-Shak, which was built in a traditional, ancient Chinese style.
without any choice, or leaving things until they could gain control over how the work would be done. Naau elaborated on her point of view:

I think it has something to do with our idea of government administration. We still take those bureaucratic officials as our higher leading bodies (shang-chi), and lower ourselves too much. We should have the right to tell them that we want to manage those projects, because they are for our community. But I don’t know if it is possible to change the process. If so, then we may still demand to have a say in how we would like things to be done, or we will make our own place worse, and it will lose its uniqueness.

Problems that occurred during tourism development have been discussed in this chapter. Due to the way ecotourism was managed, the environment was depleted and suffered habitat destruction. Mass tourism not only threatened the environment, but also forced the community to make reluctant compromises. The role of government was another influential factor with respect to legal protection, natural resource management, and inadequate intervention.
Chapter 8
Community in Transition

I observed that the Shan-Mei community, as a result of past experience, began to make a significant transition with respect to its community organization and cultural presentation. At this stage, the community did begin to notice some reoccurring problems and pitfalls, and started searching for solutions.

The Organizational Transformation of the Community Development Council

Chief officer Yanrui characterized the transition:

The resignation of Mr. Wen was like turbulence, but it's good that it pushed Community Development Council to do some structural adjustment. This year meant a lot to us; we got the largest amount of government aid ever since, and we did that by writing proposals and communicating with various government organizations, not by doing political-social things and personal networking as we used to do.

As the first organization established on a modern management model in Shan-Mei, the Community Development Council underwent a series of transitions over the years. Naau said: "We have been adjusting its function all the time, but the fundamental changes in the management model was proposed by Lim, the former secretary of the Council." By initiating institution building, Lim introduced the concept of professional management that changed the Community Development Council from a man-ruled to a more law-ruled organization. As a Han Chinese college graduate with a major in law and a long-time interest in aboriginal issues, Lim started to search for resources from
NGOs and government agencies by submitting grant proposals and making media contacts. She initiated a formal accounting and financial auditing system as well as a filing system for documents. Expressing their appreciation towards Lim, a group of female Council staff members mentioned the personal significance of getting involved in community affairs. They gave credit to Lim’s encouragement. “It brought me a sense of self-fulfillment and closer bond with my community and my culture”, said one female staff member. As for the changes in organizational culture, they stressed the importance of institutionalization because it freed the Community Development Council from some constraints of traditional culture: such as, decision-making by only a few authority figures, which usually consisted of older males, and the individual abuse of power in the absence of mechanisms of auditing and review. While she was busy making a balance sheet and meeting schedule for the monthly Board meeting, Naau stated:

> It is unrealistic to expect everyone to behave in accordance with traditional virtues and social constraints. Some parts of tradition are not working anymore, and thus we have to find new, effective ways to do things. Sometimes this might be a good change. Not everything in tradition would make sense for today’s situation; for example, there was no need for accounting in the old times, but now it is necessary for keeping the Community Development Council in good shape.

The use of information technology, including document processing and Internet communication, also exemplified the Council’s effort toward new professionalism in its organization. By the end of my fieldwork, the chief officer told me that the organization was busy learning to create and register its
own website\textsuperscript{\textcopyright} "as another window of communicating with the outside world".

\section*{Changing Tradition}

Local leaders and ordinary residents often used the term "tradition" in casual conversation and interviews; the meaning of the term seems to vary in different situations. Three different themes are associated with "tradition", based on contexts in which this term appears.

\section*{The Meaning of Tsou Culture and Shan-Mei Culture}

Tsou culture parallels traditional culture, and is situationally defined. On formal occasions for tourists or visitors, Tsou culture was usually introduced as a blend of traditional material culture and customs with focus on its "otherness" compared to Han Chinese culture. Notions or even descriptions of traditional values were often not included in formal presentations, but might be expressed more openly and directly in conversations with familiar outsiders. As for communication among local people, there was relatively little concern about traditional culture with respect to concrete objects or customs; instead, recollections of a traditional way of life that has gradually vanished, and discussions of norms and values, would be expressed from time to time.

\textsuperscript{\textcopyright} The address is http://home.kimo.com.tw/savigi. Savigi is the native Tsou term of Shan-Mei village, and the Community Development Council decided using it to name the website.
Different from Tsou culture, Shan-Mei culture reflects the present social reality of the Shan-Mei community. Besides the recognition of everyday phenomena, the local notion of Shan-Mei culture also includes some altered traditions combining old and modern forms, or mixtures of local and imported cultures. Examples of such hybrid culture include the modified design of landmarks based on traditional models, new forms of artifacts inspired by traditional ones, recently written songs with contemporary tunes and Tsou language lyrics. Crafting hunting knives and first ward development illustrate in detail how Shan-Mei has a consciously blended culture.

*Crafting Hunting Knives*

Hunting knives now are made with rattan imported from Malaysia and with iron bought from metal factory at Chia-i city. The changes in crafting hunting knives exemplifies how Shan-Mei adapted and responded to the outside economic and social system. I witnessed an incident that illustrates how the change has occurred. On the second Thursday of August 2000, a day for the “Fathers’ Workshop”, thirteen middle-aged men were gathered by the side of the main road at the front plaza of the second ward grocery store making traditional hunting knives, the subject of their crafting project. After learning from demonstrations by elders, the men were busy weaving the rattan belts and crafting knife carriers while chatting in small groups. Tourists passing by

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19 In the old days, rattan could be easily found around the village, and the local people acquired raw iron by trading with other tribes or Han Chinese.
looked out their car windows and watched curiously. Two cars turned back and stopped at the store, and seven tourists stepped out. After observing a little while, one woman tried to initiate conversation with a group of five craftsmen by asking questions, and was joined by her companions. When the tourists asked whether the belt was made of rattan, they received a positive answer. Then they began to express admiration for the delicate artifacts of indigenous culture, for wisely using natural resources, and for the lasting heritage of manual iron work. When the craftsmen replied that the knives were not for sale at that time, the tourists again praised the community’s intention to preserve traditional culture. After the tourists left, the men started joking that the tourists were naïve in believing in the primitive romance of indigenous communities. I asked if the men considered the knife itself and the production of it as traditional Tsou culture. The leader of the workshop replied: “yes”, and explained that they still use traditional weaving techniques. Even though the rattan was not grown locally, the style, weight and thickness of the iron was according to their special request to fit the criteria of traditional hunting knives.

The leader of the workshop elaborated:

Times are changing, and we have no control over it. I think what is most important is the spirit of traditional culture; for instance, the preparation work is part of the hunting lesson for Tsou men to learn how to cooperate with each other, and how to fix their tools to be good hunters. So, we try to preserve some forms of the traditional culture, just like this process of making knives, in order to give our community members the chance to understand the spirit behind the practical experience.
Example of First Ward Development

Recognized as a model for the representation of Shan-Mei culture, the first ward is a good illustration of the ideal vision of community development embraced by many local residents. Every informant I contacted referred the first ward as "the model ward" and "the hope" of Shan-Mei. Residents of other wards think that living in first ward must be enjoyable because of its cooler climate, its relative economic prosperity from the tea harvest (though not all first ward residents own tea farms), and its strong sense of community. This sense of community and internal bonding extended to the entire Shan-Mei community, through the active participation of first ward residents in the catering and vendor businesses in Tanayiku Park, and in community meetings. The first ward created its own kiosk for neighborhood gatherings. I was told on my first day in the field that the first ward came up with a new idea for constructing a studio intended for displaying and selling traditional handicrafts made by residents. Amazingly efficient, the construction of the studio, which was made of wood, bamboo, and grass with a hint of traditional design, was completed in two months. A-Gui, the Board Chairman and first ward leader, commented: "All residents should be credited for their cooperation and support, and this is what we feel proud of." Naau stated her vision, which she said was inspired by the first ward:

They (first ward) are so lovely that they keep our good traditions of sharedness and consensus, and they practice those in the fashion of modern community development. This is what Shan-Mei culture is all about, a culture that integrates new and old, and is rooted in our everyday life. I really wish the first ward could encourage all of Shan-Mei to develop in such direction. If every
ward can create its own distinctiveness, then we will develop another major attraction for Shan-Mei beyond Tanayiku Park, and I think this would be even more meaningful for local residents, because it would be something directly related to their everyday life; they should have stronger incentive to participate, and then have convenient access to enjoy it."

**Action Plan for the Future**

As Shan-Mei leaders sensed the seriousness of problems with ecotourism, they began to make an action plan to seek solutions. The first issue concerned re-attracting local people to participate in community development, especially Tanayiku ecotourism. With the preparation for the upcoming annual gu-yu festival in October as a theme, Community Development Council staff and Board members brainstormed several campaigns and launched them into every ward by intense marketing. Campaigns included the composition of "the Song of Tanayiku", the contest of the Tsou traditional warrior, and the campaign for best ward of Shan-Mei measured in terms of the progress each ward made over three months. Board Chairman A-Gui articulated his expectation: "We provide rewards, a sense of accomplishment, and a sense of honor, and we hope all these combined can stimulate local people to become more involved and build a stronger sense of community." Mayor Kao added: "The first day of the gu-yu festival will be for our community residents only and will not be open to the public. We hope this will make the residents feel that the Tanayiku Park belongs to all local people." Though these campaigns were still ongoing as my fieldwork ended, more and more local people began to talk
about them and prepared for them during the first month after they were
initiated.

The second aspect of the action plan was the training program for local
interpreters. The response of tourists who had experienced interpretation
indicated that it did result in a highly positive evaluation of Tanayiku
ecotourism and indigenous culture, as well as a greater understanding of
environmental conservation and cross-cultural interaction. Professor Kao\textsuperscript{20}, a
consultant and promoter of indigenous ecotourism, commented:

There is still much to improve in this interpretive program; it
should represent the successful integration of environment and
culture. The key point of interpretation is to acknowledge the
connection between environmental conservation and local culture.
Culture means not only the traditional culture, but also the life
experience of living in Shan-Mei, so it’s site-specific information.
For example, when introducing a bird, it is not necessary to tell
detailed biological knowledge; rather, talk about the mythology
of that bird, if there is one, or talk about personal observations or
childhood memory of it. For Tanayiku ecotourism the primary
appeal should be cultural difference and the unique environment.
The main purpose of tourism is to search for leisure and relax, not
serious learning. Tourists would like to gain some knowledge, but
don’t put too much to burden them. Just let the life experience of
human-nature harmony touch the tourists.

The third aspect of the action plan was integrating local agricultural
development with recreation to fully enhance community development. Local
residents had begun to realize that ecotourism could not serve as a primary
source of income for them; rather, it was more likely to serve as supplementary
revenue. Now aware and cautious about the potentially destructive social
impacts of tourism, local leaders tended not to want to make the community too

\textsuperscript{20} He is a Tsou from Tafuya- another Tsou village which also was one of the
two traditional big tribes. Local people call him Professor Kao as a praise of his
profound knowledge of traditional culture and ecology.
dependent on the tourism as its economic base. Since Shan-Mei was a
traditional agricultural village, the community formulated a plan to develop
specialized agriculture that could be beneficial to tourism development.
Targeted projects included the planting of hybrid pineapples, and the harvest of
medicinal plants and a new herb tea called “tomorrow leaf”. With the assistance
of experts from the National Agricultural Committee, the season of the fruit
harvest was coordinated with the high season for ecotourism, and the
Community Development Committee organized a fruit crops group to learn
about hybrid pineapple planting. A majority of participants in the group were
women; some young men also participated in the project. Starting in 1999, the
community began to sell agricultural goods in the Park, receiving quite
profitable returns. The chief officer said: “The assistance in learning new
agricultural techniques was very helpful; last year we introduced a new hybrid
fruit, and it has been quite successful. The problem is that we had to encourage
more residents to get trained if we wanted to develop recreational agriculture.”
Unfortunately, the herb tea and medicinal plants project did not go well; the
main reason for its failure was related to land tenure. The land initially set aside
for the communal farm was owned by two different families. The project ceased
when some owners rejected selling the land to the community. Several
informants blamed the owners for being selfish without providing further
explanation. Despite the difficulties of project implementation, local leaders all
confirmed the importance and inevitability of integrating new forms of
agriculture with tourism. Mayor Kao observed:

This is a great opportunity for us to develop another economic
resource to support our community. As most of our residents have
been farmers for generations, this plan is a good match; successful agriculture can supply food for tourism, and direct marketing of agricultural products in the tourist marketplace can free us from the exploitation of outside merchants. So, we just have to put more effort into convincing and encouraging villagers to cooperate.

In this chapter, I have shown that, in Shan-Mei's case, ecotourism actually benefited the community by charting its path to community development. Although experiencing problems, the community actively strove to integrate newly learned skills with existing local knowledge to develop new strategies to resolve these problems.
Chapter 9
Conclusion and Recommendations

Drawing from the discussion presented in previous chapters, the conclusion will focus on four arguments. First, Tanayiku ecotourism is best described as a hybrid activity involving a combination of nature-based tourism and ethnic tourism. It is not environmentally sustainable, for the goal of environmental conservation and education has not been met. Second, the major concern of the Shan-Mei community is not ecotourism or environmental conservation; rather, it is integrated community development, including the tourism aspect. Both local participation and government involvement play a crucial role in the community development. Third, Tanayiku ecotourism is of great significance to the cultural revitalization of Shan-Mei. It helps the community foster a new sense of identity and autonomy. Fourth, Shan-Mei has experienced a struggle in its transition to modernization, but the community's strategic adaptation made this experience different from that of other aboriginal communities in Taiwan.

The Sustainability of Ecotourism

At present Tanayiku ecotourism seems not to meet the criteria of ecotourism with regard to being ecologically sustainable. It lacks holistic conservation of the whole ecosystem; it is deficient in educating the public about environmental awareness; and it is experiencing a crisis of environmental degradation. As discussed earlier, ecotourism should make environmental
conservation a fundamental principle as well as its distinguishing feature. Without this foundation, Tanayiku ecotourism is merely common property management of a waterway and one species of fish; it is nature-based tourism, not ecotourism. From a successful conservation project to today's problematic ecology, the case of Tanayiku development also illustrates the pitfall of allowing the number of visitors to go out of control. The equilibrium point of human-nature interaction should be the main appeal of an ecotourism destination. Due to irreversibility or slow recovery from environmental damage, as shown in Shan-Mei's case, ecotourism becomes self-destructive once the goal of conservation is given up to other priorities, say, economic benefits.

What has been learned is that ecotourism demands great effort beyond good intentions to achieve sustainability. As revealed at the beginning of the conservation project, the local community is indeed more effective in managing its own natural resources if local people have strong incentives and the knowledge necessary to take care of their home environment. The value of sharedness, the model for reaching consensus, and the system of common property management characterizing traditional Tsou culture all have made a significant contribution to the success of ecotourism in its early stages. Nevertheless, sustainable ecotourism in a market economy needs more than the reputed ecological wisdom of Tsou culture described in media rhetoric. Traditional ecological practices had ceased their relevance to current Tanayiku ecotourism management, and traditional knowledge was not sufficient to deal with problems that never occurred traditionally, such as the skin disease of the fish, or the external effect of pollution generated by neighboring communities.
Hence, Shan-Mei needed professional planning and management to develop better strategies for the adaptation to dynamic changes, which did not exist in the traditional context.

Furthermore, this study shows that education about environmental awareness is of extreme importance for ecotourism. It not only distinguishes ecotourism from nature/scenery tourism, but can be the primary determinant of whether the sustainability can be achieved. To be effective, education should target both tourists/visitors and local residents. The interpretive program demonstrated that the effort to convey ecological knowledge and awareness did make tourists think and act differently. Since most tourists are not highly aware ecotourists, the community then has to take on the role of advocate if it wishes to achieve sustainable ecotourism.

Ecotourism as Community Development

The underlying ideology of the community contributed to the failure of the sustainability of ecotourism. Although Shan-Mei is recognized as a case of community development based on environmental conservation, my findings show that the primary concern of the community is the optimal well being of its residents, rather than the health of their natural environment. As the community initiated the ecotourism project, their decision was primarily based on the rationale of choosing ecotourism as a means of benign development, which was expected to lead to economic improvement, and ideally a self-reliant local economy. The introduction of dance performances, the expansion of parking
lots, and the plan to open a restaurant were all strategies designed to attract more tourists and obtain more economic benefits. The incentive for ecotourism development was utilitarian and human-centered. Rather than to prioritize the intrinsic value of a natural habitat and ecosystem, the focus of Tanayiku ecotourism was on the flourishing of human life. Shan-Mei has always exhibited a strong concern for the economic base of community development accompanying conservation efforts. What the local community thinks of sustainable development is closer to the idea of “sustainable livelihood for local residents with wise utilization of natural resources.” The implication here is that, for the community, conservation of the environment should be accompanied by economic growth, which is often not the ideal expressed for ecotourism in general. Since most local people failed to receive satisfactory economic return from the ecotourism project, their enthusiasm and belief in community development began to decline.

Moreover, community leaders had reached a consensus that ecotourism should be regarded as an economic resource to support total community development, rather than a reason for conservation efforts. Tanayiku ecotourism is “one part of (our) holistic development” (A-Gui, p.48), and was intended to “make residents better-off by providing social welfare and self-sufficient economy” (Mayor Kao, p.48). As a result, when government aid replaced Tanayiku revenue to be the primary source of financing for community development, the issue of whether the ecotourism is environmentally sound was reduced to lesser importance. The emphasis on planning for agricultural development integrated with tourism also illustrates that the community’s
primary concern was for economic improvement and a stable economic base.
Another reason for the shift to placing priority on integrated community
development was the local leaders’ fear of Shan-Mei being too dependent on
tourism. They emphasized repeatedly the great importance of controlling the
tourism development, and "being the master of their own community." It is
clear that the community desired economic improvement contributing to a
better quality of life, yet rejected unlimited development that threatens the local
autonomy.

In this case, there was something missing in local people’s
understanding of ecotourism. First, they needed to know that the profits from
the ecotourism business depend on maintaining the environment. In fact, if no
action is taken to stop the degradation of the environment, they eventually will
lose the fundamental appeal of their ecotourism enterprise, and thus, lose their
economic benefits. If local people can see that conservation and ecotourism can
be mutually inclusive and beneficial, and if their leaders can provide a realistic
plan to achieve this integration, then Tanayiku ecotourism may be regarded as a
more important part of Shan-Mei community development.

Reflections on Local Participation

Local participation is assumed to be the critical essence of a bottom-up
approach, and a means of local empowerment. The real meaning of "local
participation" should be examined more carefully beyond serving as simplistic,
empty jargon in development rhetoric. First of all, what does "local" mean? Do
local leaders speak for all residents? If not, does evidence exist to show that local people are well-off and fully represented? In contrast to a homogeneous group, Shan-Mei is rather differentiated, divided by gender, age, religion, and economic and social status, making the landscape of local participation complex. The locus of power, distribution of development benefits, and ways of communication all influence the breadth and depth of local participation.

Pitfalls observed in this study are consistent with those addressed by many other empirical cases studies (Belsky 1992, Butler 1992, Cater 1994, Nash 1996, Weaver 1998) with respect to the maldistribution of benefits and the exacerbation of internal conflicts. The case of Shan-Mei clearly shows that internal problems are critical factors influencing local participation. The above studies also show that local people do not necessarily benefit from eco-tourism, as most of the benefits are siphoned away to outside stakeholders. Shan-Mei is different in this respect because it did develop participatory decision-making and kept tourism revenues within the community. Shan-Mei illustrates the pattern of a learning curve: an initial stage of start-up enthusiasm and collaboration followed by a more realistic understanding of returns, then followed by participation declining to a smaller, more committed group of beneficiaries. Shan-Mei culture traditionally emphasized the principle of sharedness and fairness, and as the locals became less and less satisfied with the distribution of benefits, many of them felt some hidden inequity. The social welfare program funded from Tanayiku ecotourism revenues did not benefit all residents, only targeted groups such as elders over sixty or victims of accidental injuries or serious illnesses; thus, despite its good intention to provide resources
for community welfare, the limited numbers of beneficiaries made the project unpopular. The approach to benefit distribution was inappropriate. Instead, the project should have benefited everyone in a direct way; for example, by providing development funds for each ward.

Besides improved distribution of benefits, a better flow of information is important to encourage and maintain enthusiastic local participation. One reason for local disputes among residents and declining participation was the lack of sufficient two-way communication in community development affairs. Despite the prevailing ideal of broad-based democratic participation of community residents, most tasks fell on the shoulders of a few staff of the Community Development Council, instead of being shared by majority of residents. Residents started to feel uncomfortable about not being informed about what and why decisions concerning community development affairs were made. Moreover, the introverted and conservative nature of the Tsou people rendered them a silent majority. They neither actively involved themselves in community affairs, nor competed to pursue personal interests. Their unspoken needs were very likely to be neglected. The underestimation of the needs and opinions of this silent majority was definitely an obstacle to community development, and an irony, for the true meaning of community development is to encourage full local participation and direct democracy so that everyone can have a say. As discussed in the findings, the Community Development Council’s belated effort to open two-way communication through marketing campaigns showed results in increasing residents’ interest and involvement. Hence, building trust through sound communication is critical.
The Limitations of Local Empowerment and the Role of Government

Another question regarding the grass-roots bottom-up approach is the issue of limited local empowerment. Despite the promise encased in development rhetoric, this study found that local residents are very likely to remain powerless. As Harris (2000:8), argues, local people's acquisition of skills and their sense of 'ownership' of sustainable development are crucial. In the case of Shan-Mei, the lack of sound knowledge about resource management, and inadequate government assistance in this respect exemplify difficulties a local community might encounter when trying to exercise its autonomy. The examples of the inappropriate fish sculpture and kiosk in the Park show how government intervention without proper knowledge and consideration may harm the local community. This intervention not only violated local autonomy by taking away people's right to represent themselves, but also hurt the tourism enterprise by giving visitors a misleading image. In pioneering community-based ecotourism in Taiwan, Shan-Mei faced many controversial and difficult issues compounded by the lack of complete and consistent law covering natural resource management, village conservation, indigenous rights to land ownership, and traditional land tenure. Clearly government was not responsive to real needs.

The implication here is that government does play a key role, but should function in a different way. To further discuss this issue, it is important to illustrate the underlying rationale of the legal and administration system in Taiwan. First, natural resources are regarded as a common property, and are often seen as a public good that no single private body, be it an individual, a
corporate group, or a local community has full rights to control. Hence, the
corporate group, or a local community has full rights to control. Hence, the
public sector will be heavily involved, both with respect to administration and
public sector will be heavily involved, both with respect to administration and
policy making. Second, since community development has just began to
policy making. Second, since community development has just began to
blossom in less than a decade, legislation and policies have not kept pace and
blossom in less than a decade, legislation and policies have not kept pace and
adjusted. In addition to financial aid, the local community may also need
adjusted. In addition to financial aid, the local community may also need
government support in regard to providing professional assistance and more
government support in regard to providing professional assistance and more
flexibility with regulations and administrative procedures. The ineffectiveness
flexibility with regulations and administrative procedures. The ineffectiveness
of the bureaucratic system may be in part a symptom of its inappropriateness to
of the bureaucratic system may be in part a symptom of its inappropriateness to
indigenous culture. Hence, it is particularly important to grant the community a
indigenous culture. Hence, it is particularly important to grant the community a
greater degree of autonomy to pursue integrated development. At the same time,
greater degree of autonomy to pursue integrated development. At the same time,
the local community may need the help of coercive government action to
the local community may need the help of coercive government action to
resolve cross-community problems, such as pollution from an outside source.
resolve cross-community problems, such as pollution from an outside source.
What will improve government involvement in local community development is
What will improve government involvement in local community development is
its own ideological adjustment. Although the government encourages grass-root
its own ideological adjustment. Although the government encourages grass-root
community development, and tries to facilitate improvement, it seems that
community development, and tries to facilitate improvement, it seems that
basically the government's outlook is still top-down in treating local
basically the government's outlook is still top-down in treating local
communities as recipients of benefits and subordinates of administration. This
communities as recipients of benefits and subordinates of administration. This
misguided approach underlies the failure in project planning and intervention.
misguided approach underlies the failure in project planning and intervention.
The government should recognize that a true local empowerment depends on
The government should recognize that a true local empowerment depends on
government respect for the community as a citizen organization that has equal
government respect for the community as a citizen organization that has equal
primacy and power. To sum up, sensitivity toward the community's localized
primacy and power. To sum up, sensitivity toward the community's localized
context, including its aboriginal culture, rather than a blind adherence to
context, including its aboriginal culture, rather than a blind adherence to
standardized economic interventions and infrastructure investments should be
standardized economic interventions and infrastructure investments should be
incorporated into the administrative and legal system of the state. Despite the
fact that outside professional assistance is needed, and should be invited, local people should remain the ultimate decision makers to preserve true local autonomy.

The Invention of Tradition and Local Autonomy

Shan-Mei has always been relatively reserved about the disclosing its traditional culture to tourists. Ideas for dance performances and production and sales of handicrafts were proposed and carried out carefully and slowly. The same can be said for the opening of cultural craft studios in first and seventh wards. These two studios were the first cultural displays for business purposes to be located outside the Tanayiku Park area during five years of ecotourism. Community Development Council leaders and affected residents of the two wards, went through many discussions about what and how items should be displayed, and about the prevention of possible negative impacts. This case is far from the cultural commoditization described by Greenwood (1989) in his study of Alarde. Handicrafts were made for sale with local producers’ consent, and were not made meaningless to them. Shan-Mei experienced none of the negative impacts such as the exploitation of local culture and people, and the loss of cultural meanings indicated by Greenwood (1989: 173). Instead of marketing and profiting from the display or replication of traditional Tsou culture, what seemed to interest the community was the idea of how to integrate Shan-Mei culture into Tanayiku ecotourism and, further, into community development.
Not having a single notion of "culture", residents of Shan-Mei illustrate the nature of culture in several ways with varying hints of "tradition". In the case of dance performances, local people did not regard the modification of a traditional internal ritual for the purpose of public entertainment as a loss of tradition or a loss of authenticity. Rather, locals took this as an opportunity to stimulate cross-cultural communication. Moreover, the old and new meanings are not mutually exclusive but additive. Changes are more like a transition for them. The fact that the transition is not always smooth did not bother them; whether it was a problem occurring internally such as the violation of taboo, or the demand from an external audience to add an A-Mei dance, they adopted these changes to contrast with their own culture, as another way of interpretation and self-representation. As Cohen (1988: 383) suggests, performers themselves perceive continuity between the old and new situation.

The example of crafting hunting knives demonstrates the autonomy the locals have in managing their culture. Although they do not use native materials and tools of production, the new generation of craftsmen regard their knives as legitimate Tsou products. They accept the change because they do not see a possible way not to integrate the community into the external economy, be it nationwide or global. What is even more significant is that the expression of Shan-Mei culture is distinguished from the presentation of Tsou culture by recognizing it as a representation of present reality embedded in their every lives. The best illustration is the first ward representing the ideal vision of community development as described by Naau (p.76), "they keep good traditions of sharedness and consensus, and they practice those in the fashion of..."
modern community development.” The interpretive program shows how they define Shan-Mei culture as integrating tradition into new styles or meanings. The interpretation of traditional Tsou culture within the context of site specific life experience is regarded as another aspect of Shan-Mei culture.

The way Shan-Mei residents dealt with tourism-induced changes in tradition and culture demonstrates the concept of “invented tradition” and “emergent authenticity” discussed by Cohen (1988). It shows the changing character of tradition (Thompson 1996), and that tradition does continue to operate in various ways (Luke 1996). Tourism does not always destroy it, and on occasion it transforms and even stimulates its further proliferation (Greenwood 1989: 183). Whether viewing Shan-Mei culture as the refashioning of traditional Tsou culture, or as the coexistence of traditional and modern culture (Heela 1996), the valuable insight drawn from this study is that tradition and culture are rather like boxes loaded with socially constructed meanings constantly changing over time, infusing social institutions with prescribed meanings. It can be argued that the invention of tradition is a strategic adaptation to social changes by the local community; it is a strategy that allows the community to absorb or even transform the irresistible influx of socio-cultural and economic impacts in an acceptable way, instead of being assimilated forcefully without any choices.
Fostering Collective Identity\textsuperscript{21}

The true significance of the Tanayiku ecotourism project is that it fostered Shan-Mei collective identity. Few discussions have addressed this issue, but this case shows in many aspects that the success of ecotourism and the process of community development did restore local residents' confidence in themselves and gave them a sense of pride and self-worth both as Shan-Mei community members, and as Tsou, aboriginal Taiwanese.

The invention of tradition and the confidence in it, both play a key role in the process of fostering identity. Traditionally as a small tribe, Shan-Mei had positioned itself as the lower ranking segment of a higher center in Tsou culture. They lacked a Men's House\textsuperscript{22}, and had no authority to hold the millet ceremony. After experiencing ecotourism development, Shan-Mei developed, consciously or unconsciously, a new sense of identity that does not necessarily rely upon and is not attached to another center. It can be argued that gu-yu is a symbol of Tanayiku and the entire community of Shan-Mei, and serves as a substitute for the Men's house in the sense of representing cultural identity. The annual gu-yu festival is equivalent to the millet ceremony, as it is loaded with meaning and reaffirmation of collective unity. Thus the development of Tanayiku ecotourism

\textsuperscript{21} Following Thompson's definition, collective identity refers to the sense of oneself as a member of a social group or collectivity; it is a sense of belonging, a sense of being part of a social group which has a history of its own and a collective fate.

\textsuperscript{22} Although locals said there is a Men's House (kuba) in the second ward, no research of demonstration has been done yet.
allowed Shan-Mei to acquire subjective and ideological independence, and strengthened its sense of self-reliance and autonomy, which it proudly proclaims and constantly seeks new ways to exercise.

A Struggling Society in-between Tradition and Modernization

Shan-Mei not only finds itself in a new position in the context of Tsou culture, but also it has redefined the significance of being an aboriginal community in relation to the mainstream Taiwanese society, still an ongoing progress. Paradoxically the locals acquired a sense of pride and self-worth based on what they were doing, yet they perceived in themselves some bad cultural traits, and indulged in self-criticism of their shortcomings, often comparing themselves unfavorably with Han Chinese. This shows their lack of confidence in Tsou ethnicity and generally in aboriginal identity. Their lack of self-confidence is particularly apparent in the different ways they illustrate tradition. When they described the good part of tradition, they talked about life experiences and collective memories; when they criticized the bad part of tradition, they used Han Chinese’s judgments instead of their own.

The struggle associated with the transformation of social structure forced by the imposition of the nation-state system is evident in the case of Shan-Mei. After the official transition to a modern system in terms of land reform, introduction of a market economy, property privatization, the establishment of schools, and conversion to Western religion, the multiple functions contained in a unified system of communal life were shattered into
pieces. The community was inevitably merged into the nation-state system in the form of market economy, institutional management, tourism planning, information flow, architecture, and law enforcement. The root of Shan-Mei’s struggle lies in the disintegration of some aspects of tradition, such as collective land ownership. Although the value system of sharedness still works to some extent, norms supporting mechanisms of collective enforcement and control over land had already collapsed even before the development of ecotourism.

Since this is a phenomenon of modernization, the development of tourism was not a major cause, but rather an agent of change that intensified the impact of a turbulent transition. Furthermore, the significance of the case of Shan-Mei is that the painful, chaotic transition is an inescapable process. The community indeed autonomously formulated adaptive strategies to cope with the chaos, and in many ways it succeeded. Compared to other aboriginal communities, Shan-Mei is more open-minded about interaction with the mainstream society. The community not only welcomes visits of officials, experts, media, and other environmental or community organizations, but also its representatives attend conferences on environmental issues and go on educational trips to Mainland China and destinations all over Taiwan to learn lessons that will bring more improvements. Experiences of these interactions shape the empirical and dynamic "local knowledge" of Shan-Mei, as Ellen (2001) illustrated. And the flexibility in its culture helps Shan-Mei adapt better to dynamic social changes, as it strategically integrates various forces of modernization into its planning and implementation of community development.
Suggestions and Recommendations

Based on the information and understanding I obtained from the field, several recommendations may provide various stakeholders ideas for better implementation of sustainable ecotourism, as well as to increase their effectiveness in dealing with the issues raised in this study.

1. The community needs professional environmental planning and consulting to make the ecotourism sustainable. A thorough survey of the local ecosystem may be a good starting point, as it can provide necessary information for further planning to make it ecologically sound. In addition, the knowledge gained from such a survey would be useful for the design of environmental education. Assessing environmental impacts would help the community to understand the current situation, and to identify problems more accurately and precisely. Moreover, education of Community Development Council members and local residents is needed. The community must discuss and decide their priorities, and set up clear goals before receiving outside help.

2. Education to increase environmental awareness should be considered as a high priority. More effort should be put into popularizing interpretive tours, and training more local interpreters; all incoming buses should be required to hire at least one interpreter; explanatory signs should be set up along the trail to provide educational information regarding ecology and the importance of conservation. Another option is to establish a visitor information center, as Mayor Kao proposed, to give visitors an orientation to the Park and basic information about the environment. As an alternate to hiring interpreters, the
Park could also use video or audio programs to assist visitors' into self-help interpretation.

3. The building of tourism management capacity is also a critical part of protecting both the environment and the people of Shan-Mei. As a visiting tourism planner suggested, the community should define its market niche and then identify appropriate tourism strategies. In the case of ecotourism, marketing efforts should appropriately target educational institutions, especially elementary schools. The community also has to be selective in terms of limiting the number of visitors according to carrying capacity, and in terms of requiring prior reservations for group tourists, and putting restrictions on visitors' behavior towards the local environment. Promotion of soft, innovative products might be another way of making profit without incurring negative impacts. The community could print bookmarks with ecological or cultural illustrations, or make t-shirts designed by local amateur artists.

4. Government should provide technical assistance and funding to launch an ecotourism stewardship education program\(^\text{23}\) in the community. The program should include instructions on conservation principles, skills for restoring fish habitat, workshops on ecotourism management, and various case studies of other ecotourism sites worldwide. With this training program, the local people would acquire useful and necessary skills and knowledge that could enhance ecotourism and community development.

\(^{23}\) This thought is inspired by the Watershed Stewardship Education Program of the State of Oregon, hosted by Oregon State University Extension agents in cooperation with watershed councils and other groups.
5. Government should also consider legitimating customary laws regarding natural resource and environmental conservation, and giving local communities the authority to manage their own environments. Effective environmental management also requires stronger law enforcement to resolve the difficulties of monitoring and controlling cross-community environmental degradation and destruction.

As for academia, further investigation of other local communities might trace the dynamics of social change and the interaction with outside institutions, for the purpose of comparison to the experience of Shan-Mei. In the process of socio-economic transition experienced by aboriginal communities in Taiwan, what has persisted and what has changed? What has proceeded smoothly, and what has become a barrier to community development? Have these communities also become proactive in preserving their traditional culture and taking charge of their own destiny?

Evidence from this study suggests that Shan-Mei is a convincing case for tourism as a positive agent of change. Although there still exist some fundamental problems, Shan-Mei demonstrates the potential for integration of tourism with other aspects of sustainable community development. Nevertheless, the Shan-Mei community, the government, the media and the public in Taiwan must understand what makes ecotourism sustainable in aboriginal communities; it is far more than the ecological or cultural wisdom embodied in Tsou tradition.

As a community strives to achieve the goal of integrated sustainable development, it requires assistance and cooperation from many institutions in the society to be successful and to promote environmental conservation. This
study hopes to bring greater awareness of this truth through understanding of the Shan-Mei experience.
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Wood, Robert E.

World Commission on Environment and Development
Appendices
Appendix A. Questionnaire for Semi-structured Interview

1. Why did Shan-Mei choose to preserve gu-yu instead of other kinds of fish? And why was the Tanayiku Creek selected to be the focus of conservation? Does Tanayiku mean something special to Tsou people in Shan-Mei, like, a sacred place?

2. Who initiated Tanayiku conservation back in 1989?

3. What do you think is the most important thing that contributed to the success of Shan-Mei?

4. Would you mind telling me more about the concepts of environmental ethics and sustainable use in Tsou traditional culture? How do these concepts relate to the Tanayiku conservation and ecotourism?

5. What other traditional values do you think have significant influence on Tanayiku conservation and community development? And what is their influence?

6. How did the elders in the community perceive Tanayiku conservation and the ecotourism operation?

7. I have heard that the ward heads are quite influential in the community. What do you think about the role they play in relation to community affairs?

8. As for the ecotourism, has there been any investigation of the area’s ecosystem?

9. Why would the community come up with the idea of dance performances? What do you think of the current performance of A-Mi dancing and the Geisha show?

10. Has the ecotourism affected the community’s agricultural development? Does it provide new opportunities?

11. Do you think there are any pitfalls in Tanayiku ecotourism so far?

12. Over the years, has there been any major complaint about negative impacts brought by ecotourism?

13. In your opinion, has ecotourism induced any negative impacts? And how would you suggest eliminating them?

14. How would you envision Shan-Mei in the near future? What do you think would be a good action plan for it?
Appendix B. Table of Informants

1. Informants referenced in text

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<td>Board Chairman of the Council</td>
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<td>Instructor of interpretive program</td>
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<tr>
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<td>40-50</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>School teacher &amp; former Accountant of the Council</td>
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<tr>
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<td>F</td>
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<td>Grocery store owner</td>
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<td>20-30</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Outsider</td>
<td>Travel agent</td>
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<td>40-50</td>
<td>Outsider</td>
<td>Anthropologist</td>
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Appendix C
Photos

The Sign of Fishing Prohibition
Directory Sign

The Sign of Tanaviku Park
Park Entrance
Dance Performance - Initiation

Tourists watching Performance

Dancers in Traditional Costumes

Interpretive Training

An Interpreter and I
Vendors Plaza

The Vendor of BBQ Boar

The Receptionist and I in the Park Office

The Quad of Yiku Tavern

Kiosk at First Ward

The Hunting Studio at Seventh Ward
Elders' Club  Baskets made by Elders

The Community's Multiple-use Center  The Grocery Store and Its Han Chinese Owner

The Campaign of "The Song of Tanayiku"
達娜伊谷門楣下戲水區，與魚兒共遊

部落特產竹筒飯，傳統做法，美味絕佳

風味獨特的傳統銅製烤肉讓人垂涎三尺

Photos in Brochure
Snapshot of *gu-yu* in the Pool Area