

**Siraya Writing in Contemporary Tai-gi Literature: Centered on
*A Supplementary History of My Homeland, Blitzkrieg Siraya and
the Big Harbor***

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Abstract

In the dawn of the 21st century, writing about Siraya has blossomed among Tai-gi literary works. A vernacular spoken by more than 70% of the population of Taiwan, Tai-gi has been discriminated as a low language. Not until the recent decades did Tai-gi undergo revitalization. Similarly, Siraya, a Tai-lam-based lowland indigenous group, has endured stigmatization, and since the 1990s an awareness-raising movement has been pressing on. Why and how do the two fields, one involving vernacular literature and the other addressing ethnic issues, intertwine and co-effectuate a new discourse? What are the significances of Siraya writing in Tai-gi literature and in Taiwan's contemporary socio-political development?

In the beginning, the article focuses on historical factors that attribute to the formation of Siraya consciousness. Next it discusses how the rise of a new identity politics relates to the "boom" of Siraya representation in Tai-gi literature. Then the article deals with three Tai-gi works about Siraya, all of which retell Taiwan's history in perspective of Siraya's experience and mount a challenge to the dominant Chinese-Han framework.

The high-rate "exposure" of Siraya in Tai-gi literature manifests manifold significances. Re-writing Siraya marks a collective action, unfolding a new horizon of rearticulating Taiwan as a multi-ethnic nation with solid indigenous heritages.

Keywords: Siraya, multi-colonization, Tai-gi, national identity, interethnicity

**Tong-tāi Tâi-gí Bùn-hák ê Siraya Su-siá: Iōng *Hiong-sú Póo-ki*, *Kuat-tsiàn*
Siraya kap *Tuā-káng-tshui* tsò Tiong-sim**

Tēnn, Ngá-î

Kok-lp Tâi-uân Su-huân Tâi-hák Tâi-uân Gí-bùn Hák-hē Phok-sū Hâu-suán-jîn

Tiah-iàu

21 sè-ki tshoo-kí í-lâi, iōng Siraya tsò tsú-tê ê Tâi-gí-bùn tshòng-tsok ná lâi ná tsuē, bûn-luī kap hong-keh mā ná to-iūnn-huà. Siraya su-siá tann í-king tsiānn-tsò Tâi-gí bûn-hák-tiong tng teh hing-khí ê 1 kóo tiâu-liū.

Tâi-gí sī Tâi-uân ê pún-thóo gí-giân tsi-it. 7-siānn í-siōng ê Tâi-uân peh-sènn iōng Tâi-gí tsò in ê bó-gí. Tsóng-sī tsit ê gí-giân tsāi-lâi hông tánn-ap tsò kē-kai gí-giân. It-tit kah tsuè-kīn 20 guā nī Tâi-gí-bùn ūn-tōng tsiah táuh-táuh-á khí-kiānn. Siraya tui Tâi-lâm khí-ki, king-lik 400 nī ê sit-bîn thóng-tī, tiòh kah 1990 nī-tāi, tsiah tuè pēnn-poo hók-tsin ê sí-sè tsiām-tsiām phû-thâu. Tâi-gí-bùn tsham Siraya, 1 ê khan-liân-tiòh bó-gí-bùn, līng-guā 1 ê siók tī tsók-kûn ê huân-tiū, tse 2 tsióng ūn-tōng sī-án-tsuánn ē-tàng tshuàn-liân, suà hīng-sīng 1 ê sin ê lūn-sút? Tsit ê tshuàn-liân án-tsuánn tsin-hīng? Koh, tī Tâi-uân hiān-kim ê tsing-tī, siā-huē tsīng-kíng tiong, Tâi-gí bûn-hák ê Siraya su-siá thé-hiān siánn-mih khuán ê ì-gī kap tiōng-iàu-sing?

Pún-lūn-bûn tsi-sing thàm-thó Siraya ì-sik sán-sing ê lik-sú in-sò, suà-tsiap thó-lūn sin ê jīn-tōng tsing-tī tsham Tâi-gí bûn-hák-tiong Siraya su-siá ê kuan-liân-sing. Lūn-bûn tiong-kan koh iōng 3 phō su-siá Siraya ê Tâi-gí tsok-phín tsò lē, pí-kàu in tsuánn-iūnn thong-kuè tsài-hiān Siraya lâi tiōng-kiàn Tâi-uân ê lik-sú, suà thiau-tsiàn iōng Tiong-kok Hàn-jīn tsò tiong-sim ê tsú-liū sú-kuan.

Tâi-gí bûn-hák ê Siraya su-siá hián-bīng kuí-nā tīng ì-hâm. Tiōng-sin su-siá Siraya lòk-sit 1 ê sin ê tsip-thé hīng-tōng, mā khai-tián sin ê lik-sú guān-kíng, kā Tâi-uân tiōng-sin síong-siōng tsò 1 ê kū-pī hong-hù lâm-tó guān-sòu ê to-guān tsók-kûn kok-ka.

Kuan-kiàn-jī: Siraya, tsuē-tíng sit-bîn, Tâi-gí, kok-tsók jīn-tōng, tsók-kûn siong-hōo-sing

1. Introduction

*At dawn
Let us come home
To Lake Grand Mama Siraya
Together we peddle
Trailing over the field
Where old tribes settled
Flowers smile
Greeting us and Grand Mama
Our Forebears are long gone
Only their stories pass on
Along the old trails we trod upon
Where sparrows chirp in beaming meadow
Where Grand Mama once had trekked
Home Siraya
Lake of Grand Mama
Ripples twinkle with memory
Retelling her untold story
... ..
Ripples circle
Spreading to the shore
The day we stand
In tears of rejoice
By the long-forgotten lake
Uterus of Grand Mama Siraya*

Tiunn Tek-pun¹
June 4, 2010

¹ The poem is an excerpt from “Together We Return to Lake Grand Mama Siraya” (Tiunn, 2010: 24). The author of the poem, Tiunn Tek-pun, lives in Ko-hiong (Kaohsiung). It is written in Tai-gi and translated by the author of this article. So are the other quoted passages of literary texts in the following sections.

The poem above exemplifies a salient phenomenon in contemporary Tai-gi literature.² In the beginning of the twenty-first century, writing about Siraya emerges as a vital feature of Tai-gi literature. More and more Tai-gi authors embrace an enthusiasm for the Tai-lam-based lowland indigenous group that was barely noticed in the Chinese-Han mainstream but has been engaged in a vigorous revitalization in the last two decades. Re-addressing Siraya, Tai-gi creative writing lay out a new way of re-envisioning Taiwan. More importantly, such a writing action pokes a challenge to the dominant Chinese-Han discourse, which places Taiwan within the Han-centric Chinese framework and marginalizes indigenous communities.

The prevalence of Siraya writing in contemporary Tai-gi literature hints at multilateral significances. It epitomizes a collective endeavor to explore the possibilities of redefining Taiwan from a non-Han, non-Chinese standpoint. Equally noteworthy, it meets the timing that Taiwan hits a crossroad—the fledgling Taiwan nationalism is encountering new waves of Chinese narratives, which is often coated in globalism or pan-Chineseness.

The relation between Siraya and Tai-gi literature manifests intersections of multiple agents in Taiwan’s current socio-political milieu. In the country, Tai-gi is a vernacular spoken for at least three hundred years by over 70% of Taiwan’s population; however, it has been discriminated as a low language³ (Li, 1996: 113-157; Ng, 1994: 19-21). Tai-gi used to be defined as a Chinese-Han dialect, and the Tai-gi-speaking Hoklo group was categorized as a subgroup of Han people. With the political liberation of Taiwan’s society after the lift of martial law in 1987, whole-scale social movements sprouted up. Immersed in the *zeitgeist* of Tai-gi revitalization, indigenous activism and lowland indigenous movements, many Hoklo members, including a group Tai-gi writers, start to re-explore their previously concealed indigenous ancestry.

² In perspective of multi-cultures and “naming right”, the rendering of proper names of each ethnolinguistic community are respected in this article. The proper names of Tai-gi-speaking community are rendered in Peh-oe-ji, which is a Tai-gi Romanization orthography introduced by Scottish missionaries in the 19th century. Accordingly, those of Hakka, indigenous peoples and Mandarin-speaking communities are rendered in their native tongues respectively. If a person sticks with a specific rendering of her/his name, it is respected, too. The term “Tai-gi” is referred to the native language of the Hoklo people, who constitute over 70% of Taiwan’s population. Due to this, Tai-gi is also called “Holo”. Besides, Tai-gi is the language that has prevailed in most lowland indigenous villages for over a century. The KMT authorities re-named Tai-gi as “Southern Min”, which means “southern Fuk-kien dialect”, after they took Taiwan in 1945. However, the renaming has triggered controversies. Recently Hoklo activists protested against the name “Southern Min” for its discriminative connotation and association with China.

³ The term “low language” derives from sociolinguistics. In a society some languages, for instance, Mandarin and English in Taiwan, are regarded as “high language”, which means they are associated with refinement, high-brow culture and higher status. In contrast, other languages, such as Tai-gi and Hakka, are regarded as languages spoken by rude, poorly-educated, uncultured people. Such a phenomenon is called *diglossia* (Fasold, 1996: 147-244).

Among lowland indigenous groups, Siraya acquires the furthest representation in Tai-gi literary works. The reasons could be attributed to interwoven historical, linguistic, cultural and geo-political factors. Unlike northern Taiwan, where Mandarin dominates the contemporary political center, Tai-gi prevails as an important communal language in the south, including Siraya's hub Tai-lam. Apart from this, in the last four hundred years, Tai-lam had been erected as the capital of three colonial regimes, and as a result it is endowed with enriched cultural resources.⁴ Even up to now the historical city is still abundant in political and cultural movements. Lots of Tai-gi writers and intellectuals reside there, organizing Tai-gi-related movements and other types of grassroots activism.

In addition, since the 1990s, the surge of Siraya consciousness has drawn attention from Tai-gi activists in the south. As Sirayan villages are geologically nigh and mingle with Hoklo communities, many Tai-gi writers start probing into the history and culture of their previously obscure "neighbors", relocating Siraya as a source of inspiration.

Aside from geological proximity, shared linguistic culture between Sirayan and Hoklo communities also arouses the curiosity of Tai-gi writers and a particular warm feeling toward Sirayans. As the Sirayan tongue went into demise around the mid-19th century, Sirayan forebears switched to Tai-gi.⁵ Owing to long-term sinicization, intermarriages and co-residence with Hoklo immigrants, it is sometimes hard to tell a Sirayan from a Hoklo as they resemble each other in appearance, language, behavior and customs.⁶ Previously many Tai-gi writers identified themselves as Han descendents; thus, they were startled when hearing about the existence of Sirayans in neighboring areas. Notwithstanding, their initial shock turned into empathy and a heart-felt bond with Siraya, which was later transformed into an incentive to study Siraya and an enthusiasm to rearticulate the lowland Austronesian people

⁴ From 1624 to 1875, Tai-lam was the capital of the Dutch Formosa, Koxinga and the Ching Empire (Khoo, 1996: 133).

⁵ The Sinkan dialect is a Romanized orthography based on the Sirayan language of the Sinkan branch. It was invented by Dutch missionaries in the 17th century for the purpose of preaching Christianity in Sirayan communities. Dutch missionaries translated *the Gospel of Matthew* and other Christian books into the Sinkan dialect, founding schools in Sirayan villages, and taught local people to read and write in their native tongue. After the Dutch era, Sirayans continued to use the Sinkan dialect and applied it when they signed land contracts with Han settlers. With the dominance of Han culture, however, the Sinkan dialect finally stopped being used in the mid-19th century (Li, 2003: 17-19; Ang, 2004: 40-1~40-10).

⁶ As Melissa Brown noted, a great number of Han males who immigrated to Taiwan in the 17th century married Sirayan women, as Tai-lam was then a major landing destination for Han male settlers. Brown estimates that in the Dutch era "the mixed people" made 39 to 52 percent of Taiwan's population. The trend of intermarriage went on in the Koxinga and Ching reigns. Many descendents of mixed ancestries changed their identity from Siraya to Han as Han culture became dominant. Brown (2004: 134-144) dubs this phenomenon "short-route identity change". Her observation is supported by recent genetic evidence, especially the research done by Dr. Lim Ma-li.

through creative writing.⁷

In perspective of Taiwan's multi-colonial history, both Tai-lam and Siraya come with a distinctive historical status, which other locations and ethnic groups lack for. In the 16th and 17th centuries, Tai-lam was Taiwan's sole entrepôt along southeastern Asia's maritime course. Sailors, pirates, businesspeople from southern China, Indo-China, Portugal, Japan, Spain, the Philippines and the East Indies stopped by Tai-lam and traded with Sirayans (Khoo, 1996: 6-8). Before the Dutch took Taiwan as a colony in 1624, Sirayans had already encountered a variety of foreign cultures. In the ensuing years, Tai-lam was erected as the capital of Dutch Formosa, Koxinga and Ching regimes, as stated above. In the meanwhile Tai-lam functioned as the major entry of Chinese Han mass immigration. As a consequence, Sirayans became the first Taiwanese people that endured the most penetrating and extensive effects of multi-colonization (Khoo, 1996: 6-68; Nara, 2003: 161-174). Therefore, re-writing Siraya plays a key role of re-imagining Taiwan's colonial historiography.

2. Thematic Framework of the Article

The following discussion takes approaches of postcolonialism, especially theories on representation, identity, language choice, vernacular literature, and hybridity.

Post-colonial studies unravel a new counter-discourse that “produces oppositional truth”, challenges hegemonic discourses and espouses an ultimate goal of actualize political justice via academic endeavors (Wilson, 2005: 147-149).⁸ With regard to scope, the post-colonial tasks addressed in this article involve a multilateral and interlaced counter-discourse. The plural “oppositionalities” include Siraya v.s. Chinese-Han framework, a Siraya-oriented new Taiwan identity v.s. Han-centric Chinese identity, and Tai-gi as a vernacular v.s. Mandarin as a

⁷ During a field trip, a college student in Taiwanese culture and history once shared with me her feelings toward Siraya. The relatives of her father's side come from Ka-li-heng, which is next to Pak-thau-iunn, a stronghold of the Soulang branch of Siraya. She described her feelings the moment she learned that Sirayans lived in the neighborhood of her hometown, “they're our neighbors. They're just like us, like our brothers and sisters. We're so close!” she said. And she believes that she has Sirayan descent, despite the lack of any evidence to prove her lineage.

⁸ Wilson does not define postcolonialism as “of, relating to or being the time following the establishment of independence in a colony”, as most scholars may do. Instead, he rejects teleological modes of thinking and re-defines postcolonialism as a “perspective or academic attitude that directs methodology”. Wilson (2005: 140-141, 148-149) thinks that the ranges of postcolonial studies cover “the moment of colonization to the present day” and that postcolonialism should suggest “a political agenda” and “motivate people to create change.”

colonial/official language, etc.⁹ Furthermore, the research is expected to deal with Taiwan's interethnic relations in light of hybridity and hopes to develop a new ethnic politics.

The increasing representation of Siraya in contemporary Tai-gi works proclaims struggle for a new identity politics. It indicates that the Taiwanese people yearn for a new historical narrative that differs from the historical accounts based on Chinese-Han centric standpoints or perspectives of any other previous colonialists. Colonization and decolonization are both political processes. For the colonized people, winning the mandate to represent themselves means to speak up and spark up a process of decolonization (hooks, 1992: 4-5). Rewriting Siraya into Taiwan's historical re-imagination empowers the Taiwanese people with a voice to re-define Taiwan and an "oppositional gaze" to resist against Chinese-Han dominance (ibid: 115-131).¹⁰

As Stuart Hall (1997: 3-11) notes, meaning is not fixed, but being constantly contested, exchanged, deconstructed and reproduced. Melissa Brown points out that identity keeps shifting in different temporal and spatial contexts. In other words, identity develops in the internet of all kinds of social, political, economic and cultural dynamics. Therefore, "identity must be negotiated" she says, "Identities of individuals are socially constructed." (Brown, 2004: 13-19) In this light, Siraya writing in contemporary Tai-gi literature preludes a new interethnic relationship between lowland indigenes and Han descendents. In addition, the salience of Siraya-related representation foregrounds a re-innovated Taiwan identity, which conveys a multi-ethnic horizon and must negotiate/compete with Chinese-Han-centric hegemony.

Brown states that historical representation, in her words "narrative of unfolding", concerns not only the past but also the present. Based on "the relation of the past to the present", people "selectively reshape [their] understanding of the past for political purposes" (Brown, 2004: 6). Actually, aside from fulfilling a present need, historical interpretation often contains a vision of the future.

⁹ Mandarin is a language imposed upon Taiwan by the KMT regime after World War II. Its situation resembles how English was induced into India. India's literary critic B. Rajan contends that English should not be regarded as an Indian language because it "is a language imposed upon India rather than nourished by its soil". So does Kenyan writer Ngugi wa Thiong'O rejects English as an African language, as he thinks that English was induced into Kenya via colonial occupation (Talib, 2002: 92-96).

¹⁰ At birth, bell hooks was named Gloria Watkins. She chose "bell hooks" as her pen name and insisted that every letter of her name should be rendered in small type so as to gesture a resistance against white male-centric mainstream value system.

bell hooks contends that historical connections between the past, the present and the future are constituted in a community and transformed into dynamics of individual and collective action. By “relearning the history” and affirming “the ties of the past” with “the bonds of the present”, a “shared sensibility” within a community will be re-cultivated (hooks, 1992: 194). Besides, history inspires “passion and love” among members of a community (ibid: 183). With such an emotional register, history ferments “resistance struggle”, stimulating the power of love for transforming a society. Rewriting Siraya’s history in Tai-gi literature rekindles “counter-narratives”, which confront mainstream historical representations (ibid: 174-175). Such a counteraction of remembering restructures a shared dream of a future “imagined community”, evolving in the mutual vision of contemporary Taiwanese people.¹¹

Besides, the shared interest of Tai-gi writers in Siraya translates a grassroots collective effort. According to Chuang Ya-chung, contemporary grassroots activism features identity politics. Recent social movements encircle politics of meaning and identity, which replaces previous concerns about relations of production, such as controversies over pay, working hours, and the right to strike, etc. The competition for “historicity” becomes “the main stake of social struggle”, marking “the capacity for self-representation” and “the rights of the subject” (Chuang, 2004: 13-15). In fact, to accomplish self-empowerment, underprivileged local groups must take the initiative to rearticulate their historicity. Rewriting Siraya, Tai-gi writers erect a “counter-memory” as a “new site of resistance” and a reservoir of de-colonizing momentum (hooks, 1992: 172-178).

Choosing Tai-gi as a language for creative writing manifests a decolonizing motivation. As afore-mentioned, Mandarin was imposed upon Taiwan as an official language by the KMT. Privileged by political maneuver, Mandarin edges out Taiwanese vernaculars and dominates media, education, market profits and readership. Taiwan-born intellectuals, as their counterparts of many pre-colonies, become accustomed to thinking and writing via the official language. Many of them take writing Mandarin for granted and even defend the use of Mandarin despite their Taiwan nationalist standpoints.¹² Therefore, for Tai-gi writers, the

¹¹ The concept “imagined community” is invented by Benedict Anderson. The term is referred to “nation” (Anderson, 1991: 5-7).

¹² The hottest debates between Taiwanese writers about the legitimacy of continuing using Mandarin for creative writing occurred in the late 1980s and 1990s (Iunn, Tiunn & Li, 2008: 598-609). The strife between Mandarin and Taiwanese language is mirrored in the debates between English and vernaculars of England’s pre-colonies. According to Ismail Talib’s research on English and postcolonial literatures, writers of many pre-colonies of England have a better command of English than their native tongues. And there have been many controversies over whether writers should keep writing in this colonial language. Some, such as Chinua Achebe and S. Rushdie defend

switch from Mandarin to their native tongue signals a tremendous transition of their personal politics. More importantly, the phenomenon marks a collective counteraction against Chinese lingual-cultural hegemony, leading to a multi-interrelated oppositional discourse.

Re-addressing Siraya and their native tongue, Tai-gi authors crisscross interethnic and inter-lingual-cultural relations. They reinvent a tradition—re-erecting Taiwan as a multi-ethnolingual nation with solid indigenous heritages.¹³ In Fanon’s (1961/1995: 155) words, they fulfill the “responsibilities” of “combat literature”. According to Brennan (1990/1995: 170-173), they help sketch a “national longing for form”.

Nevertheless, Tai-gi writers must tackle the contradiction that historically Tai-gi was the language brought in by Hoklo settlers from southern China. As afore-stated, due to sinicization, Tai-gi replaced the Sirayan language in Sirayan communities in the mid-19th century. In Taiwan’s entangled multi-colonial internet, Tai-gi is both a victim of KMT’s language policy and a repressive tool that has a share in pushing the Sirayan tongue and other lowland indigenous languages into extinction. Facing the dilemma, some Tai-gi writers stress that they have no choice but to confront the status quo: the Sirayan language, despite starting to revitalize, is still in embryo stage and hard to become an efficient tool for creative writing at this moment. Another reality is that Tai-gi has already become the native tongue of most Sirayan descendents. One of my Sirayan friend, who is also a Tai-gi teacher, points out that over the last two centuries Tai-gi has absorbed plenty of Sirayan elements and that Sirayans should not be stripped off their “native” language again.¹⁴

Tai-gi writers Tan Lui and Oo Tiong-siong admit that the demise of the Siraya tongue is “a serious mistake caused by Chinese-Han-centric prejudice and a tremendous loss of Taiwan heritages”. Oo says that he “is willing to face this historical burden and take it as an admonition, and that he will prevent the same linguistic massacre from reoccurring to other Taiwanese vernaculars”.

their choice of English out of consideration of global market, readership and prestige. Others, such as Ngûgî wa Thiong’O and Michelle Cliff, insist on writing in their native tongues to materialize thorough decolonization (Talib, 2002: 90-136).

¹³ The expression “reinventing a tradition” derives from a concept introduced by Eric Hobsbawm. In the book co-edited by him and entitled *the Invention of Tradition*, Hobsbawm states that the “invented tradition” is a set of practices conducted to erect historic continuity for ideological movements and groups, including nationalism (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983: 1-14).

¹⁴ My Sinkan Sirayan friend, Ili Domok voiced her opinion about Tai-gi and Siraya in a talk in July, 2007 in Tai-lam.

Tan Lui, a Tai-gi writer pioneering Siraya representation, confesses that Tai-gi writers' not being able to speak and write Sirayan is "a regrettable fact" and "a historical mistake of Chinese-Han-centric maneuver. "Taiwanese people with different ethnic grounds should keep this lesson in mind, and learn each other's languages and cultures" he adds. In his eyes, writing about Siraya in Tai-gi proclaims a determination of not repeating the same mistake and an attempt to re-erect Taiwan subjecthood. He stresses that each ethnic community should have equal share of co-constituting Taiwan. If someday Mandarin stopped repressing other languages, he would abide by the same moral criteria and respect the right of the Mandarin-speaking group.¹⁵

While dealing with entangled interethnic contradiction, Tai-gi writers in the meanwhile present "imagined" solutions in their works. Fredric Jameson pinpoints creative writing as a symbolic practice and narrative as a socially symbolic act. Historical interpretation embodied in literary works often provides "imaginary and ideological solutions" to unresolved socio-political contradictions in real life (Jameson, 1996: 351-353). Through writing on Siraya, Tai-gi writers contribute ideas about how to remove mutual animosity between Han and Sirayan descendents, and how to re-envision Taiwan in perspective of a new interethnic relationship.

Hence, Siraya writing in Tai-gi literature can be discussed in perspective of hybridity. Despite clashes, the crisscross of different languages and ethnicities should be regarded as "a strength rather than a weakness", as the contradictions stimulate the brainstorming for overcoming them and facilitate "a dialogic process of recovery and reinscription". Above all, the hybridization of plural-ethnic cultures evades the replication of the typical Chinese-Han binary categories of "civilized Han" and "barbarians". By developing "new anti-monolithic models of cultural exchange and growth", the encounters foreground intercommunal solidarity in Taiwan's grassroots activism (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 1995: 183-184).

In the process of addressing aftereffects of previous interethnic conflicts and seeking possible solutions, a new multi-ethnic historical vision comes forth and enables "a dialogue with the past". Such an intersection represents present responses, which are not only conditioned by the past but lead to more "dialogues with otherness". The "dialogue" keeps

¹⁵ Oo Tiong-siong's remark is based on an interview held in Ko-hiong on March 30, 2012. Tan Lui's ideas about Tai-gi and Mandarin are collected by email correspondence in September and October, 2006.

going and evolving as “the permanence is never static” but “an eternal process of becoming” (Peterson & Rutherford, 1995: 185-188).

In the meantime, a new Taiwan psyche and a new identity based on intercommunal interactions are created in the infinite interaction between the past, the present and the future. It is also through such a “positive imagination” that a new “counter-culture” is dawned, which shatters the Chinese-Han myths that portray the Tai-gi vernacular and the indigenous traditions as “historylessness and nonachievement” (Dash, 1974/1995: 200-201). As Homi Bhabha claims, culture functions as a “political struggle” and the difference in languages and cultures are crucial for cultural production, ensuring that “meaning is never simply mimetic and transparent”. The enunciation of cultural difference can create “a third space”, unfolding a new location of politics (Bhabha, 1988/1995: 206-208).

Previous strife between different ethnolinguistic communities poses an enormous challenge; however, the test may open up a turning point and an opportunity for reconstructing a new multiethnic comradeship.

On the other hand, the blossoming of Siraya representation in Tai-gi literature should not be understood as a single incident, nor a whimsical idea invented by few individuals. As Ngûgî wa Thiong’o observes, any work is actually a “collective effort”, not merely an isolated piece created by an individual author out of the blue. As authors get “input” from the entire social, political and cultural milieu, literary works should be considered “products of a collective history” (Ngûgî wa Thiong’o, 1986: preface). Accordingly, the study of a literary work should be contextualized with the “habitus” of its production.¹⁶ This explains why it is necessary to explore interlaced factors of Taiwan’s history in the following section.

Ngûgî’s view corresponds with Raymond Williams’ theory on “structure of feeling”. Williams defines the term as “the culture of a period”, and “the particular living result of all the elements in the general organization”. Though “it is as firm and definite..., it operates in the most delicate and least tangible parts of our activity.” (Williams, 1961/1994: 61) “Structure of feeling” represents the world view of a community in a specific temporal-spatial

¹⁶ “Habitus” is a concept invented by Pierre Bourdieu. It refers to life style, values, disposition and expectation of a particular group acquired through everyday life. To put it in a more basic term, “habitus” can be understood as a “feel of game”, a “practical sense” that prompts a person to act or react in a specific way. In Bourdieu’s (1993: 4-6) words, “habitus” is a “system of dispositions”.

surrounding, and, whether detectable or not, it is co-constructed by multiple factors intertwined in a society. In this sense, Ta-gi writers may be regarded as re-creating Siraya collectively in the “structure of feeling” of contemporary Taiwan.

3. Reflection on Tai-gi and Siraya Revitalizations Since the 1980s

The lift of martial law in 1987 proclaimed the end of KMT’s authoritarian rule and the full-scale liberation of Taiwan’s society. Issues that used to be repressed were now discussed freely in public domains. Among them, ethnic inequality was brought forward, which sparked up waves of indigenous movements.¹⁷

In actuality, Taiwan’s indigenous revivals have been connected with the torrent of worldwide indigenous activism since the 1960s.¹⁸ Before 1987, Taiwanese mountain indigenous activists had founded organizations and initiated awareness-raising movements to reclaim their traditional territories.¹⁹ Inspired by their mountainous counterparts, lowland indigenes unraveled their revitalization in the 1990s, demanding official recognition of their ethnic status as Taiwan’s indigenous groups.²⁰

Compared with their mountainous counterparts, lowland indigenes were more “invisible” in the Chinese-Han-centric mainstream society. Historically lowlanders were exposed to more extensive and profound colonial control and cultural subjugation. In the case of Siraya, as

¹⁷ Taiwan’s indigenous movements started in the early 1980s when the KMT’s control became porous. Icyang Parod, a Taiwan indigene activist, refers to 1983, as the beginning of Taiwan indigenous movement. In the year *Youths of Mountains* (高山青), a magazine issued by indigenous college students, was founded (Parod, 2008: 17-18). In this stage the majority of the activists came from mountainous regions.

¹⁸ After World War II, with the transformations of many pre-colonies into new nations, indigenes in many parts of the world started to claim their separate identities and cultural heritages, launching organizations to work on their collective rights. The global trend inspired Taiwan’s indigenous peoples, who had been suppressed for 400 years by different colonial regimes (Hsieh, 2006: 47).

¹⁹ The term “mountain indigenous people” is actually a misnomer. Not all of the mountain Austronesian indigenous communities are located in mountainous regions. The exceptions are the Pangcah (formerly known as Amis) people, who live in coastal plain of the east coast, and the Yami people, who reside in the Orchid Island. However, to distinguish “mountain indigenous peoples” from lowland Austronesian peoples, who used to populate plains or coastal regions, the article still uses the misnomer.

²⁰ In the 1950s, due to miscarriage of government’s documents, only three counties, Hoa-lian, Tai-tang and Pin-tong, were informed that lowland indigenes could register their ethnic status as indigenous peoples. Lowland indigenes of other cities and counties were stripped off this opportunity. In 2009, lowland indigenous groups around Taiwan organized a mass demonstration in Taipei, petitioning the Central Government to grant them a legal status as Taiwan’s indigenous peoples. More activities have been held in the ensuing years. So far their plea has been rejected repeatedly by President Ma’s government (Tan, 2012: 8-1~8-4; Tai-lam County Government, the Committee of Siraya Indigenous People’s Affairs, 2010).

above-mentioned, their stronghold Tai-lam had been the political hub and the earliest “civilization” center since the 17th century. In the meanwhile lots of Chinese immigrants swarmed into Taiwan’s southwest coastal plain, marrying Sirayans. With a high rate of intermarriages and the Han hegemony buttressed by colonial rule, Sirayans became highly sinicized. Gradually they yielded their land, property, language, and cultural tradition. By contrast, mountain indigenous groups, owing to geological remoteness, were dubbed by Chinese Han as savages and left outside the “civilized circle”. It was not until the early 20th century, in the second half of the Japanese rule, that mountain indigenous peoples were conquered by the modern apparatus of state of the Japanese troops (Khoo, 1996: 146-252). Thus even in a declining condition, mountain indigenes were able to maintain their ethnic identity and relatively intact languages and traditional cultures.

The demise of lowland Austronesian culture, however, stimulates new interethnic and national re-imaginings in the post-martial-law period. Tai-gi writers and intelligentsia, who were previously identified as Hoklo descendents, take the initiative of redefining Taiwan by interlinking the two fields—Tai-gi and Siraya.

Spoken by the largest Hoklo group, who constitute the majority of Taiwan’s population, Tai-gi has never acquired the status of an official language, nor become the symbolic token of a nation language. The low status of Tai-gi and other Taiwanese vernaculars derives from multi-colonization. In the Japanese era, the colonial language Japanese enjoyed access to educational system and other public dimensions, while Taiwanese vernaculars were excluded from public schools. Although modern Tai-gi literature budded in the 1880s, Tai-gi writing was suppressed as Taiwan was forced to get engaged in the Japan-initiated warfare and ensuing mobilization.²¹ From 1949 to 1987, under the KMT’s monolingual policy that privileged Mandarin, Taiwanese vernaculars were further stigmatized and even associated with lower social class and culture (Li, 1996: 115-119). It was not until 2001 that the Tai-gi course was listed in the curriculum of Taiwan’s educational system (Li, 2006: 4).²²

²¹ The beginning of modern Tai-gi literature can be traced back to 1885 when “Taiwan Prefectural City Church News” was founded, which became Taiwan’s first print medium. It was a magazine purely rendered in Tai-gi Romanization. Having gone through several transformations, the circulation of the magazine has been lasted for over a century.

²² Although Taiwanese vernaculars are finally listed in curriculum of elementary and high school, they still face the crisis of being wiped out. Mandarin has become the most powerful language in Taiwan after the long-term implementation of Mandarin-privileged language policy. In addition, local and central governments are indifferent to the unfavorable condition of Taiwanese vernaculars. In 2006, then chief of the Committee of Hakka Affairs Yap

As the KMT's dominance ebbed in the early 1980s, Tai-gi literature burgeoned in North America and in the island. Lots of Tai-gi writers have been dedicating themselves to the revival of their native tongue. They write about Taiwan's landscape, culture and history based on Taiwanese standpoints, which differ a lot from those of China-Han-centric narratives and used to be condemned as "unpatriotic" by the KMT authorities (Tiunn, Kang & Sim, 2001: 58-73). The revival of Tai-gi is still pressing on, mounting a strong counteraction against centuries-old multi-colonization which deprived the Taiwanese people of their linguistic-cultural subjecthood. In the meantime, inspired by the awareness-raising of lowland indigenous movements, Tai-gi writers started to explore this previously ignored field and re-examine Taiwan's colonial experience in the shoe of lowland Austronesian peoples.

Tai-gi writers' interest in lowland indigenes coincides with the increase of lowland studies in Taiwan since the 1980s. The thaw of the political climate unleashed enthusiasm for Taiwan studies and the boom of lowland indigenous researches. Lots of academic papers and books about lowland-related issues have been published. New archives, especially those of the Dutch era, have been discovered, translated and circulated among the intelligentsia. Among them Siraya drew much attention, as Sirayan forebears had the earliest and most profound multi-colonial experience, as above-mentioned, and got more representations in archives than other lowland indigenous groups. Though these previous representations unavoidably bear colonial mentalities, Siraya may become better known than other lowland groups owing to this kind of "misrepresentation" and acquire more "visibility" in contemporary literature. Besides, many Tai-gi writers reside near Tai-lam, which is in the proximity of Sirayan communities.²³ Newly-excavated archeological ruins in Tai-lam provide evidence that in the prehistoric stage, thousands of years before arrivals of European merchants and other colonists, Sirayan ancestors had already resided around Taiwan's southwest seashores, swamps, plains and hills.²⁴

Khiuk-lan uses a metaphor of hospitalization to describe different deteriorating degrees of Taiwanese vernaculars: "Hoklo is checking in, Hakka, in the emergency ward, while Austronesian tongues are in intensive care units." (Ong, 2006)

²³ Since 1995, many Sirayan tribes revived their tradition of *pakasalan*, which is referred to annual nocturnal worship of their collective ancestral souls, *alid*. Since the mid-1980s more and more books and articles about Siraya have been published, and lots of Siraya-featured academic conferences have been held. Grass-roots Sirayan groups were also founded. In 2005, then Tai-lam County Government declared Sirayans as "the Indigenous People of Tai-lam" and set up a committee affiliated with the Bureau of Culture (Tai-lam County Government, the Committee of Siraya Indigenous People's Affairs, 2010: time line of Siraya).

²⁴ The archeological teams of the Academia Sinica excavated two pre-historical sites in Tai-lam. One can be traced back to 0-1600 A. D, the other, 1500-1600 A.D. The relics of the latter have been proved to be left by Sirayan

In the period, a few Mandarin writers also embarked on representing Siraya. Among them are two attention-retaining works, Ong Ka-siong's novel *To-hong Estury* and Iap Chioh-to's *the Last descendent of Siraya*. The former represents the history of Mattao Sirayans from pre-Dutch to the Koxinga days. The latter tells about a Sinkan Sirayan woman's life story that spans over the Japanese and the KMT rules and highlights her sexual activities with five males.²⁵ Nevertheless, the two Mandarin writers pick a pessimistic tone, representing Siraya as a "dusking" group that heads toward the destiny of demise. In contrast, Tai-gi authors, despite feeling sad for Siraya's sorrowful past, take an upbeat attitude. On the one hand they probe further into psychological impacts of multi-colonization; on the other hand they ascend the interethnic re-imagination to a dynamic that leads to the vision of a multiethnic nation. Apart from this, Tai-gi authors stick with the language that has been prevalent in Sirayan communities for nearly two hundred years, while Mandarin authors apply a verbal tool that seems "alien" to most Sirayan villagers. The language choice of Mandarin may aesthetically and emotionally detach the writing subjects and the objects being written about.

Equally noteworthy, new generic discoveries in the 2000s have a pivotal impact on Taiwan's interethnic mapping and national re-imagination. According to the newest research by Lim Ma-li (2010: 77-95), approximately 85% of Taiwan's Hoklo and Hakka populations, who were previously regarded as Han descendents, are biologically related to indigenous peoples.²⁶ The scientific evidence shatters the centuries-old Chinese-Han-centric racial myth that claims Taiwan's Hoklo and Hakka as descendents of Han settlers from China. Due to the brainwash of this ethnic misrepresentation, indigenous elements were played down or wiped out in media and educational systems. Consequently many Hoklo and Hakka Taiwanese identify themselves as Han and insist on tracing their lineage back to China. With the newest revelation of Taiwanese biological history, Hoklo and Hakka peoples are buttressed with a

forebears (Tai-lam County Government, the Committee of Siraya Indigenous People's Affairs, 2010: time line of Siraya).

²⁵ Siraya is divided into two major branches, Tevorang and the Four Big Villages. Tevorang Sirayans reside in the hilly regions of east Tai-lam, northern Ko-hiong, and parts of the east coast. The Four Big Villages scatter in the plain of central and west Tai-lam, including the four branches: Mattao, Sinkan, Soulang and Backloan.

²⁶ According to Lim Ma-li's newest research, the DNA of the body remains of ancient Sirayans shows that 40% of Sirayan genetic origin is related to mountain indigenes, which indicates the ties from the maternal side and the Austronesian lineage. The rest 60% of ancient Sirayan genes, from the paternal side, are related to ancient peoples, probably forebears of the Viet peoples, who lived in the southeast part of the continent of Asia thousands of years ago. The newest discovery proves that longtime ago Sirayans and peoples from the Asian continent had frequent and close contacts. More remarkably, it enhances further relations between Sirayans and Hoklo/Hakka peoples, as they share not only indigenous lineage but also genetic ties from the Continent of Asia. The discovery listed in this footnote is based on Lim's critique during a Q-and-A session in a Siraya symposium held on December 18, 2012 in National Taiwan University.

“material” foundation for not becoming Chinese nor becoming Han. They hold solid reasons for selecting a non-Han, non-Chinese identity, which by the way gives a thumbs-up to contemporary Taiwan nationalist movement. Although kinship is not a prerequisite for nation-building, the generic discovery unshackles the Chinese-Han national myth based on races, consolidates de-Han, de-sinicizing endeavors, and unveils new horizons for re-envisioning Taiwan.²⁷ More importantly, it provides Hoklo and Hakka groups a substantial bridge with indigeneity. Many Tai-gi writers in Tai-lam, who have the Taiwan nationalist consciousness, quickly embrace a Siraya identity, notwithstanding lack of any documents or reports of blood tests to prove their lowland indigenous linkage.²⁸ As Oo Tiong-siong states, when Tai-gi writers believe and claim that they are Sirayan descendents, when they write about their “imagined” Sirayan forebears, “Sirayan ancestry becomes a new myth that reincarnates and re-effectuates among them” (interview with Oo on March 30, 2012).

The release of the new biological evidence meets the timing that fledgling Taiwanese nationalism encounters tremendous backlash from the formerly dominating Chinese camp. Despite the outgoing of the old-day Chinese bloc from the political forum, Chinese hegemony still hangs on, continuously wielding their power over media, education, public opinion and lingual-cultural affairs. However, unlike its predecessor that advocated Chinese supremacy bluntly, the “neo-Chinese camp” of the post-martial-law era takes subtle approaches. The “neo-Chinese” spread Chinese ideology by borrowing trendy theories of post-structuralism, postmodernism, globalism and pan-Chinese narratives, applying de-centering schemes to propagate de-nation concepts and anarchic void.²⁹ Paradoxically Taiwan is neither a state *de*

²⁷ “De-Han” does not mean to destroy every bit of Han heritage. Neither does a de-sinicizing endeavor intend to strangle every particle of Chineseness in Taiwan’s society. Instead, “de-Han” and “de-sinicizing” mean to deconstruct the superiority of Chinese-Han-centric values, put it in an equal status with other values, and open up access for previously-repressed non-Han and non-Chinese agents. Although the contemporary state of China is made of different ethnic groups, the Han people dominate other groups, and Han culture becomes the dominant culture. Po Yang (柏楊) (1995: 161-162), a renowned writer born in China, critiques, “Chinese nationalism is not intact and well-addressed. It only sugarcoats Chinese chauvinism. Chinese are mainly referred to Hans”.

²⁸ The documents for evidencing lowland indigenous status include land contracts of the Ching period and official population records of the Japanese era. Some lowland indigenes, out of poverty, signed a contract with their indigenous names on it, and sold their land to Han settlers. In the Japanese era, to consolidate colonial control, the Japanese authorities recorded ethnic identity of the Taiwanese people when they conducted population surveys. Some of the records are retained.

²⁹ For example, two renowned Mandarin writers, Chu Tian-sin and Su Wei-chen, express de-Taiwan and de-nation positions in their works. Chu’s novellas, “the Ancient Capital” and “Taro Urashima Long Time Ago”, show resentment to Taiwanization. As Chang Da-chun (1992: 13-15), a Mandarin male writer points out, “Taro Urashima Long Time ago” poses a satire to ridicule previous political prisoners, who had been persecuted by the KMT and struggled to redeem justice after the martial law was lifted. Su’s novel, *Silent Island*, deconstructs Taiwanness by staging a Taiwanese female protagonist, who functions as a symbol of Taiwan but is portrayed as being disoriented and living a wanton sexual life—having promiscuous sex with males of various nationalities.

jure, nor a nation *de facto*. Although for a short period Taiwanese nationalism became more salient after the lift of martial law, it faltered and struggled hard. What “the neo-Chinese camp” targeted to deconstruct was the fledgling Taiwanese nationalism. With the de-nation disguise, the group attempt to depoliticize Taiwan consciousness and to maintain the status quo of Chinese hegemony in a more implicit way—in the name of global consumerism and pan-Chineseness.

As Oo Tiong-siong notes, “the neo-Chinese camp” used to criticize that Hoklo and Hakka groups, who make over 80% of Taiwan’s population, are Han Chinese and are not “authentic” enough to address a Taiwan identity. According to this neo-Chinese contention, only indigenes have the right to claim themselves as Taiwanese natives. Such a race-based view hinders the formation of Taiwan national consciousness, as the most populated Hoklo and Hakka groups are disqualified for becoming Taiwanese (interview with Oo on March 30, 2012). Lim’s discovery, however, overturns the neo-Chinese racial hypothesis. With the solid “counter-evidence”, Hoklo and Hakka peoples are endowed with the “authenticity” of claiming at least a mestizo status, which also “legitimizes” the re-erection of their subjecthood as Taiwan natives.³⁰

Furthermore, such a mestizo condition witnesses hybridity as an outcome of multi-colonization—whether it was actualized by colonial power invasion to enhance political and economic control or by settler-invaders’ dispossessing and “assimilating” indigenous people. Re-addressing Sirayaness and her hybridity, Tai-gi writers opens up a dialogue with the past, which is likely to produce originality and a process of psychological recovery from long-term colonial trauma (Petersen & Rutherford, 1976/1995: 185-189).

4. A New Taiwan-based Interethnic Politics

According to Will Kymlicka, Taiwan, like most countries in the world, is both a multinational and polyethnic state. It means that Taiwan is comprised by many indigenous communities and immigrants.³¹ The surge of lowland Austronesian indigenous consciousness

³⁰ “Mestizo” is originally referred to a mixed-racial child conceived by a North American indigene mother and fathered by a Spanish or Portuguese male. In this article, “mestizo” is referred to the mixed-racial descendent whose kinship can be traced to an intermarriage between a lowland indigene and a Hakka or Hoklo.

³¹ The terms “national minority” and “ethnic group” are invented by Will Kymlicka. A national minority is a “historical community occupying a given territory or homeland and sharing a distinct language and culture”.

in general and Sirayan awareness in particular in the post-martial-law period coincide with the spiral of ethnic, cultural and linguistic clashes in many parts of the world in the wake of the cold war. The upheaval evidences that most countries are culturally diverse. It is only through seeking a resolution of interethnic fights and bringing forward reconciliation that the integrity of a state can be secured (Kymlicka, 1997: 1).

To reach the goal, it is necessary that citizens of a multi-ethnic/plural-national state must cultivate a shared patriotism, though they may not retain a common national identity. Despite their varied ethnic backgrounds, they must be agglutinated by “shared values”, “shared conception of justice, ties of civic friendship, a shared pride” in their country and a shared and “positive” memory of the past of their state (Kymlicka, 1997: 187; Si, 1998: 187). Most importantly, they must embrace “deep diversity”, which means that in addition to identifying with an ethnic/national community, an individual must espouse mutual respect and recognition for other communities and participate in the creation of the “diverse images of their country” (Kymlicka, 1997: 187-190).

In terms of multiculturalism, democratization does not merely refer to individual rights but also tackle the collective rights of an ethnic/national community. The protection of an ethno/national community must be founded in justice, which lays the bedrock of mutual trust and interethnic solidarity. Protecting an ethnic heritage benefits the entire society. For a specific ethno community, it harbors a sense of belonging for its members. Moreover, preserving a unique ethno value system provides more options for expressions and cultural resources, which can be shared by every individual (ibid: 83-84). Democratization and indigenization are actually two sides of a coin. It is crucial that in a multi-cultural democracy the citizens must “desire union” rather than “unity” and that they must seek a patriotism to “unify” them “without fusing” them (ibid: 192).

Although ethnic diversity plays a critical part in the formation of a multi-ethnic/national state, ethnicity is not totally racially-based. In actuality ethnic identity is co-constituted by various components, such as language, society, history, and above all a personal choice based on an individual’s personal politics and engagement in a specific ethnic culture (Kymlicka,

Eventually a national minority may seek self-governing or even independence to preserve the collective right of the community. In contrast, an ethnic group “typically wishes to integrate into the larger society and to be accepted as full members of it while seeking greater recognition of their ethnic identity”. However, their aim is not to seek separation, but to “modify the institutions and laws of the mainstream society to make them more accommodating of cultural differences” (Kymlicka, 1997: 10-11).

1997: 22-23; Si, 1998: 179). It is based on the standpoint of “deep diversity” that Hoklo-descent Tai-gi writers can claim their liaison with Sirayaness and lowland indigenusness. For the same reason, Hakka and Hoklo groups share a bond of comradeship in their respective endeavor to save their native tongues.³² Likewise, Taiwanese citizens with mainland Chinese descents have the right to decide on their ethnic identities while appreciating other Taiwanese ethnic culture and joining in the action of rearticulating Taiwan’s diverse collectiveness.

According to Stéphane Corcuff’s research, distraught by a deep sense of crisis in the post-martial law era, the so-called “mainlanders” still express a strong inclination of Taiwanization. The rendering of mainlanders’ Taiwan identity may differ from other communities in Taiwan; however, Taiwan identity has a wide spectrum and keeps being restructured, interacting with all of the agents in the society (Corcuff, 2004: 14, 136-149).

As for the cleavage between lowland groups and their mountain counterparts, it is mainly encircled on the controversies over resource appropriation. Many mountain Austronesian elites are concerned that if lowlanders are granted legal ethnic status the benefit mountainers have enjoyed may be divided and even reduced.³³ However, with the revision of constitution and the implementation of new laws, equality and justice among different ethno-national groups can be actualized and interethnic tension among these communities are expected to be ameliorated. As Si observed, ultimately interethnic relations must be institutionalized. Only when each ethnic community perceives that they are fairly treated and their collective rights are not infringed can mutual trust and real social stability be achieved (Si, 1998: 192-193).

The institutionalization of interethnic ties is likely to materialize in consociationalism.

³² The cleavage between Hakka and Hoklo groups are centered on the two terms “the Taiwanese people” and “the Taiwanese language”. In the past Hoklo people were accustomed to refer their ethnic community as “the Taiwanese people” and their native tongue as “the Taiwanese language”, which made Hakka people perceive that their group and language were excluded. And the ruling KMT used to take advantage of the interethnic conflicts between the two most populated ethnic groups, and even forged the quasi-phenomenon of “Hoklo chauvinism” to deepen the split. However, political scientist Si Cheng-hong (1998: 182-185) thinks that both Hakka and Hoklo have been thoroughly Taiwanized and that with the revision of the terms and continual dialogues between them, the controversy over names can be resolved.

³³ In the *Matagisal* Sirayan communal conference held in Hoan-a-chhan, Tai-lam on September 14, 2013, the executive secretary of the Committee of Tai-lam Siraya Indigenous People’s Affairs Uma Talavan (a.k.a. Ban Siok-koan) confessed that many mountain Austronesian peoples are worried that their benefits, such as supplements for elder citizens, bonus for national exams and education, will be snatched once lowlanders are granted the legal status of Austronesian indigenous peoples. Some mountainers argue that themselves can not compete with lowlanders because the latter have experienced longer colonization and are more accustomed to the mainstream society.

The resolution of the interethnic warfare in former Yugoslavia and Northern Ireland proves that consociational democracy may be the only way to create sustainable peace in an ethnically divided society through the guarantee of proportional representation, mutual veto and autonomy of significant groups (Aitken, 2010: 232-233).

Under consociationalism, identity can be multi-layered and hierarchal. In Taiwan's situation, a citizen may have an individual identity with a specific ethnic/national group while she/he shares an identity with the state of Taiwan with members of other communities. The two dimensions of identities do not contradict with each other (Si, 1998: 197).

The development in Bolivia may inspire Taiwan about a re-founded nationalism. The erection of a "trans-ethnic" Bolivian identity is based on interculturality and interethnicity is materialized in the "dialogues between cultures" (Si, 1998: 198; Máiz, 2010: 36).

Claiming itself a plurinational state, Bolivia asserts Indianism and sets an example of realizing interethnic solidarity within a multi-ethno-national country. After long-term deindianization and military repression, the current Bolivia government recognizes the "natural authorities" of the indigenous communities, including the rights of their homelands and languages, and embarks on constitutional reforms. More significantly the endeavor is a nationwide heterogeneous movement that mobilizes not merely indigenous peoples but also whites, Indian-Spanish mestizoes, peasants, miners and middle-class, spanning across different ethnic groups and classes. With the renewed indianization, Bolivians take pride in "the second independence of [their] nation" and proclaim their country "a nation of nations". They regard their homeland as "culturally and linguistically plural", which is empowered by a "unity in diversity" and "autonomy with solidarity" (Máiz, 2010: 17-36).

5. Three Tai-gi Literary Works about Siraya: *A Supplementary History of My Homeland, Blitzkrieg Siraya, and the Big Harbor*

Cultural and artistic practice embodies social actualization. Tai-gi production about Siraya yielded its initial fruit in the turn of the new millennium. *India Coral Reblossoming* (刺桐花開), a Tai-gi opera, may well be regarded as the first Tai-gi piece that highlights lowland

indigenes.³⁴ Produced by Taipei-based Chen Meiyun Taiwanese Opera Troupe, it was debuted in 2000 in the National Theater. The opera tells about a tragic love story between a Han male settler and an A-kau lowland indigenous woman. Being in love with each other, the couple faces clashes of ethnic value systems—between patriarchal Chinese-Han mainstream and matrifocal Sirayan tradition.

Despite pioneering Tai-gi representation of Siraya, the opera seems ambivalent about interethnic issues and historical justice. At the end, while the A-kau wife is severely injured and about to pass away, she hands her new-born daughter to her Han husband, imploring him, “take our daughter back to China!” Her final message seems to pose a submissive gesture toward Chinese Han hegemony. Ironically, her husband takes a diasporic trip to the hinterland with their baby girl and other lowland indigenous survivors.

Moreover, the indigenous female protagonist dies of a blow inflicted upon her during endemic warfare and the ensuing military suppression conducted by the Ching troops. A mountain indigenous people mount a headhunting expedition against her home village, which leads to the relentless bombardment imposed by the Ching authorities and eventually prompts the survived villagers to take an exodus. The episode exaggerates the harm of the headhunting religious custom and violates the historical reality that headhunting, compared with Chinese-Han invasion, was a small-scale strife and unlikely to cause the destruction of an entire lowland community. In the play it seems to suggest that mountain Austronesian peoples should also be blamed for co-resulting in the downfall of their lowland counterparts. In fact, the decline of lowland indigenes was mainly triggered by Chinese-Han colonization.

In the wake of the performance of *India Coral Reblooming*, Tai-gi representation of lowland indigenes takes a more explicit position on interethnic and nation forming issues. Among them are the three works discussed in the following.

5.1 *A Supplementary History of My Homeland* (鄉史補記)

The 270,000-word roman-fleuve was published in 2008 by Kingan Publishing House in

³⁴ India Coral tree is a plant with cultural significance in Taiwan’s indigenous culture. Several indigenous peoples, such as Siraya, Makatto, Pancha and Yami, take the plant as a holy tree and an important symbol. The blossoming of India Coral indicates a new year and the season for seeding, household cleaning and canoe building to catch flying fish.

Tai-lam. It emerges as the first Taiwanese mega-fiction that centers on lowland indigenous people. The story tells about the interior diaspora³⁵ of eight Sirayan families who wander around Tai-lam, Takao (Ko-hiong), Pin-tong and the east coast during the last two centuries when Taiwan was under the reigns of the Ching Empire, the Japanese and the KMT. As time passes, the Sirayan people are stripped off their territory, language, and collective memory. However, their descendents manage to reconstruct their history and identity, re-situating Sirayans in the socio-political context of contemporary Taiwan.

As afore-mentioned, the author Tan Lui is a forerunner of Siraya writing in Tai-gi literature. Born in 1939 in Nanjing, China, he grew up in his hometown Tai-lam, studied in North America in the 1960s, and has been living there ever since, practicing family medicine in Toronto, Canada.³⁶ Reflecting on his childhood, Tan Lui acknowledges “the psychological origin” of his Tai-gi writing is rooted in the temporal-spatial context of southern Taiwan in the 1950s and the 1960s. “I’m blessed for having been immersed in then Taiwanese society. I have had close interaction with ordinary people, and witnessed their strong commitment to their communities. The experiences inspire me and strengthen my confidence. It is an important spiritual resource. In my memory, Taiwan is forever a warm, bright and beautiful homeland.” (Tan Kim-sun, 2008: 8-9)

In the early 1960s when Tan Lui studied medicine at National Taiwan University, he published three Mandarin collections, two of poetry and one of prose. By the mid-1980s, despite embracing a strong Taiwan consciousness, he continued to write in Mandarin. As most of his Taiwanese peers of the post-war era, Tan Lui was educated by the medium of Mandarin from elementary to college, and had been accustomed to using it for creative writing. However, in 1986 when he wrote a novel about the 228 massacre³⁷, he began perceiving a split and tension between the Mandarin narrative and the dialogue of Tai-gi-speaking protagonists. He

³⁵ The word “diaspora” derives from Greek. Initially it was referred to disperse of Jews in the last two millenniums. Nowadays the word indicates dispersal experiences of any groups of people (Lin, 2006: 72-74). In this article Sirayans’ exodus is termed “interior diaspora” because they remained in Taiwan despite being driven away from their home villages.

³⁶ Tan Lui’s original name is Ngoo Keng-ju (吳景裕). His parents were Tai-lam natives. During the Second World War, Nanjing and a few other parts of southern China were occupied by the Japanese troops. Like many Taiwanese people of the Japanese period, his family moved to Nanjing, where his father ran a business. At age 6, Tan Lui returned to Taiwan with his family. He spent his childhood in Tai-lam.

³⁷ The 228 massacre started in Taipei in February 27, 1947, and spread to the rest of the country from the next day on. It lasted for about a month. During it over 20 thousand civilians were killed and many more people were injured or missing. The biggest civilian revolt in Taiwan’s modern history, 228 was caused by corruption and abuse of the KMT authorities. After 228, the KMT implemented the martial law, imprisoned and executed thousands more (Khoo, 1996: 471-507).

considered such a split an aesthetic degradation that decreases precision, vividness, expressiveness and emotional contagion. “For a writer, describing Tai-gi-speaking roles in Mandarin is a translating process. For a reader, decoding Mandarin passages undergoes another translation in a reversed direction. The dual translation process exposes duplicated weaknesses of Taiwan literature,” he observes (Tan, 1992: 216-217). At that moment, he decided to switch his creative writing language from Mandarin to Tai-gi, comparing this transition to a “revolution” (ibid). He realizes that Tai-gi as a vernacular makes a solid part of Taiwanness and paves the bedrock of Taiwanese psychography. To him writing in Tai-gi marks both an aesthetic must and a retrieval of a fundamental vernacular right, which had been taken away by colonial regimes.

Regarding Siraya writing, Tan Lui explicates that rearticulating Siraya lays the foundation of reinnovating a national identity:

The hegemonic Chinese-Han-centric historical view is biased and distorting. Over the years it has hindered Taiwanese people from cultivating confidence and a true cognition about themselves. To deconstruct the Chinese-Han framework, lowland indigenous consciousness plays an important role. Moreover, lowland indigenous elements facilitate the reconstruction of Taiwan as a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural nation and enhance the formation of a new Taiwan identity. (e-mail letter, November 19, 2006)

Tan Lui started writing *A Supplementary History of My Homeland* in September, 1989, and completed it in January, 2005. The roman-fleuve has two predecessors. Initially it came forth as a short story published in 1998. Then it was expanded into a novelette and published in 2001. In the meanwhile Tan Lui kept collecting data about Siraya’s history, enriching the story, and eventually developed it into a 270,000-word roman-fleuve.

Both the short story and the novelette share the same title with the roman-fleuve. The title implies that Chinese-Han-centric historical accounts are insufficient and one-sided. Thus, Tan Lui intends to reconstruct a new historical narrative as a “supplement” and “counter-narrative”.

To represent Sirayaness, Tan Lui creates Sirayan heroines to play significant roles in the roman-fleuve. In Siraya’s matrifocal tradition, women were physically strong and mentally tenacious. They have the right of choosing a husband and inheriting family property, share

economic production with their male partners, and host religious practices in their communities. In contrast, Han women were foot-bound and frail, subordinating themselves to patriarchy. Tan Lui describes how a fifteen-year-old Sirayan female Pau-sim³⁸ resists against a Han male military chief. The latter not only abuses her father and other Sirayans but attempts to rape her. Pau-sim kills him on the scene of the failed sexual assault:

Ang Chhenn-hoan [the Han male] pressed a knife on her chest, saying “be good, and you won’t die,” and tried to untie her skirt and kiss her...Pau-sim held a long-sharp pod hidden in her waist belt, pulling Ang’s long hair and pressing him down to the ground. She stamped her foot upon his body. Angered, Ang cursed, “go to hell, you hoan-a (barbarian)!” Angered, Pau-sim thrust the pod exactly into Ang’s heart. His ribs crackled, while his heart was still beating. (Tan Lui, 2008: 88-89)

The scene that Ang is pushed down to the ground and killed by a Sirayan woman in her self-defense conveys multifold ironies and symbolic significances. It embodies counteractions of three dimensions. In terms of colonial hierarchy and power relations, it manifests decolonizing action against the Chinese-Han colonial manipulation. In perspective of interethnic ties, it indicates a resistance against Chinese-Han’s dominance over Sirayans and other indigenous groups. In light of gender, it pokes a challenge against patriarchal enslavement of females. Besides, sexual assault against women of a defeated people is considered a symbol of colonial conquest.³⁹ Ironically in the scene the stereotyped roles of the winner and the failure are inverted. It is the privileged Chinese-Han male colonist and rapist that is subdued by the colonized, underprivileged Sirayan female.

In the second half of the roman-fleuve, Tan Lui invents a Siraya-Paiwan founding myth, which is also a re-invented Austronesian-based Taiwan national myth. The re-invented legend is based on an ages-old Paiwan myth about how Paiwan ancestors were transformed from hundred-pace pit vipers into human beings (Tien, 2002: 1-23).⁴⁰ As a mountain indigenous

³⁸ “Pau-sim” is referred to “corn” in the Sirayan language.

³⁹ Colonial conquest is often conducted by rape of women of the defeated side. For example, as the Japanese troops entered Nanjing, China in the late 1930s, they were ordered to mass rape and slaughter Chinese women. In the 1990s Serbian troops also implemented mass rape against Bosnian and Kosovo women as they took their countries. bell hooks (1981: 15-49) observes that white male masters did the same thing to Afro-American women in days of slavery. Sexual assault, especially mass rape, is applied as a hyperbole of military triumph and an insult to further inflict the defeated people.

⁴⁰ The hundred-pace viper is respected as a holy species by some Taiwanese indigenous groups, who take the animal as a totem. Patterns of the snake is applied in embroidery, wood carving and stone sculpture by Paiwan people.

group in Pin-tong, Taiwan's southern tip, Paiwan is geographically close to Siraya, which facilitates the imagination that the two groups derive from the same ancestry.

To recreate a Taiwanese genesis, Tan Lui borrows the biblical style, applying patterns of short, simple sentences and a solemn tone to build up a divine aura. Associating Siraya with Paiwan, he further stresses indigeneness as a significant characteristic for reconstituting Taiwanness:

In the beginning, there were snakes in the world. They crawled all day long and found little food. The Creator felt sorry for their hard life and re-created them as humans. From then on they walked with two feet and hunt with two hands. The Creator said, "You must remember that you were snakes." And the snakes asked, "How do we remember this?" And then the Creator said, "I give you the name of humans. You are called Paiwan. You must remember this. You have no navels, because snakes have no navels. I gave you Mountain Tai-bu as home, because mountains are everlasting and they witness our covenant. You are souls of Mount Tai-bu." Snakes thanked the Creator and replied, "We will remember this. Our name is Paiwan." As time passed by, however, Paiwan people forgot their promise and had navels. Only the name of Paiwan was passed on generation after generation. (Tan Lui, 2008: 410-411)

This re-invented Taiwanese genesis forms an interesting contrast with its prototype in the Old Testament. In the Taiwan version, the snake is neither represented as an evil inducer of the original sin, nor punished with the curse of lacking feet and crawling around on their bellies. Instead, the animal is blessed with limbs and benefits from a "positive lack" of the navel. The image of the snake is changed from a messenger of the devil to an ancestor of human beings and a token of bliss.

5.2 *Blitzkrieg Siraya* (決戰西拉雅)

Since its debut in 2010, *Blitzkrieg Siraya*⁴¹ has won applause from both literary critics

⁴¹ The term "Blitzkrieg" originates in an attack strategy staged by German military during World War I. It means to mount a sudden attack and win a quick victory. The German troops practiced this strategy in World War II when they invaded Poland, Norway, Denmark, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxemburg, France, etc ("World War I and World II", 1979: 272-290). In this article, "blitzkrieg" is referred to the warfare, which makes a climactic event at the end of *Blitzkrieg Siraya*: Sirayans take a fast-paced counteraction against an arch enemy that launches a destructive invasion into their homeland.

and the audience (Tēnn, 2010.11.15). The puppet play is distinguished in two aspects. First, contrasting the majority of Tai-gi puppet plays, which are placed in the Chinese framework, *Blitzkrieg Siraya* is based on the historical context of Taiwan. Secondly, it is the first Tai-gi puppet play that features a lowland indigenous people (Tenn, 2010: 7-18; Liau, 2010: 15-19).

The textual location of the play is situated in Tevorang, a hilly region in eastern Tai-lam. It tells about how descendents of Sirayans and Han settlers overcome a deadly crisis. The Black Devil, an evil spirit that commands a big throng of gangsters, is about to mount a destructive attack against Sirayan villagers. Confronting the arch enemy, Sirayans and Hans decide to lay down mutual animosity, which has been accumulated for generations. Together they fight, defeating the Black Devil's gang. In between, *alid*, the collective body of Sirayan ancestral soul, and other deities give them a hand. Through the experience Sirayans and Hans change their relations from foes to friends. The play culminates with an ending scene of two "crisscrossed" interethnic weddings: one between a Sirayan bride and a Han groom while the other between a Han bride and a Siryan groom. It signifies interethnic reconciliation between indigenous peoples and Hans and a new vision of multiethnic Taiwan.

The playwright Tan Kian-seng was born in 1960 and raised in Giok-chenn, a town in east Tai-lam, where Han and Tevorang Sirayans co-resided.⁴² The play was produced by Tai-lam-based Ong Ge-beng Super Puppet Theater. Chia Beng-iau, a renowned pop musician from Taipei, composed five songs for this Kim-kong puppet piece.⁴³

Similar to Tan Lui, Tan Kian-seng started his writing career in Mandarin in his twenties. It was not until 2004 that he switched to his native tongue Tai-gi for creative writing. During the writing process, he gradually realized that language is not merely a communicative tool, but also a container of feelings and ideologies, and that only through his native tongue can he expresses heartfelt warmth.

At the same time, he pondered on the confined acceptability of Tai-gi literature in

⁴² Tan Kian-seng's parents ran a miscellaneous store in Giok-chenn. His father passed away when he was still young. Graduating from high school, he moved to Tai-lam city, where he ran a small cafeteria for a few years and then worked with the Tai-lam Municipal Government on cultural projects.

⁴³ In terms of Taiwan's puppet arts, Kim-kong means "drastic changes" or "hyperbole". The term emerged in the 1950s when puppet plays underwent tremendous transformations. A new breed, Kim-kong gradually replaced traditional puppet plays. The Kim-kong performance features hyperbolic styles, such as overflowing battling scenes, enlarged puppet dolls, exorbitant design of puppets, mixture of Taiwanese songs and western music, extravagant mis-en-scène, enchanting lightness, sound effects and exploding effects (Goo, 2005: 123-126).

Taiwan's society. It occurred to him that new genres, such as different forms of drama, might help enlarge Tai-gi readership (interview with Tan Kian-seng on March 10, 2011). In the summer of 2009 Tan Kian-seng met Ong Ge-beng, president of Ong Ge-beng Super Puppet Theater. Originated in Tai-lam, the troupe has won recognition from both the local and the central governments for its contribution to the preservation of traditional arts.⁴⁴ From then on Tan and Ong have been collaborating on several theatrical projects.

Born in 1954 in Sian-hoa, Tai-lam, a Backloan Sirayan village, Ong took an apprenticeship with a prominent puppet artist Ng Chun-hiong at age 16, initiating a decades-long performing tenure.⁴⁵ Insistent on Taiwanization, Ong was disappointed that most of the scripts of Taiwan-produced puppet plays are pivoted on China. So was he dissatisfied with a popular breed, "the fighting puppet play", which is adapted from Chinese stories but seemingly deviates from China's context. Ong criticizes that "the fighting puppet play" is deprived of historical substantiality and becomes "groundless and valueless". He kept inquiring, "Why can't I perform something based on local stuff? Why can't I perform a play about us the Taiwanese people?" (interview with Ong on August 4, 2011) Since the mid-1990s he started seeking scripts based on Taiwan with the hope of triggering a breakthrough of his artistic career.⁴⁶

With Ong's encouragement, Tan Kian-seng worked on his first script of puppet play from August to November, 2009. The moment Tan told Ong about the title, Ong was "thrilled", for he loved the concision and spirited phonetic image of "Blitzkrieg Siraya" (ibid).

Tan was a novice of puppet performance. Thus during the writing process, Ong and his

⁴⁴ In 2007, Ong Ge-beng Super Puppet Theater won Lam-eng Traditional Art Prize. Two years later it was nominated by Headquarters Administration of Cultural Heritage, the Council for Cultural Affairs of the Executive Yuan, as a culture-preserving group. Nationwide only three puppet troupes were awarded with this honor (Chia, 2010: Introduction in the cover of *Blitzkrieg Siraya Music CD*).

⁴⁵ Ong grew up in an impoverished family. Before the school age, his parents left home. He and his younger brother were raised by his grandmother. The three of them lived in a warehouse-turned hut beside a squash booth and ate squashes for nearly every meal. Because of harsh economic condition, Ong and his brother did not go to school regularly. At age 10, their grandmother passed away. Ong made a living by doing dishes for food stands in front of a big temple in his home village. At age 16, as his brother graduated from elementary school and was able to take the dish-washing job, Ong decided to take apprenticeship with a puppet troupe, fulfilling his childhood dream of working with the theatre (interview on August 4, 2011).

⁴⁶ Ong Ge-beng had looked for Taiwan-based scripts for more than ten years. However, it yielded no concrete result. In the summer of 2009, he met Tan Kian-seng during the debut of a Tai-gi musical, *the Wanderer*. The lyrics of the songs performed in the play were adapted from Tan's poems. Ong was excited about the combination of Tai-gi poetry, music, and modern dance. He thought that similar combination can be applied in a puppet play. So he contacted Tan and started their cooperation (interview with Ong on August 4, 2011).

troupe held many “trial plays” for a section of the draft, giving feedback to Tan to help him make revisions.⁴⁷

Meanwhile, with Tan’s recommendation, musician Chia Beng-iu joined in. Ong was greatly impressed with Chia’s dedication to promoting local language and culture.⁴⁸ Well-established as a Mandarin pop song composer and familiar with Mandarin lyrics, Chia could have gained more prestige and profit if he had kept working with Mandarin pop singers. However, Chia is willing to take more “brewing time” to study Tai-gi composition, even though it yielded less fame and income (ibid). With Tan’s Tai-gi poems as lyrics, Chia composed five songs for *Blitzkrieg Siraya*.

The play has an effect on reshaping interethnic cognition of its producing team. Ong reveals that despite living in Tai-lam for quite a while, some of his colleagues hardly heard about Siraya until they participated in the production of *Blitzkrieg Siraya*. Surprised, they were grateful and overjoyed for having the opportunity to learn about Siraya’s history and culture and develop a special bond with the indigenous people living nearby (ibid).

In regard to identity, Tan Kian-seng contends that identity politics centered on race is superficial and quite “Chinesed”. He challenges the hegemonic Chinese-Han discourse that stresses the biological tie of Han immigrants and frames Taiwan in the 5000-year Chinese tradition. In his opinion, if the origin of humans is re-examined from a global perspective, it can be traced back to Africa over 50 thousand years ago. During the long spans of time indigenous peoples played a significant part. Tan contends that the choice of identity should be based on “human dignity and culture”. Creating *Blitzkrieg Siraya*, he comes with the hope of dissolving the race-centered Chinese national myth and bringing forward “a new historical horizon”. Such a new vision, as he says, must be grounded on multiethnic standpoint and incorporate indigenous elements in re-positioning Taiwan.” (interview with Tan Kian-seng on March 10, 2011)

⁴⁷ Ong says that a script has to fit the visual confinements of the stage, the maximum of puppet dolls’ motion and oral presentations. As Tan was a novice playwright, some sections of his script were too hard to perform. After a trial play, Ong and his troupe would discuss with Tan about difficulties of performance and offered suggestions for revision.

⁴⁸ Chia had worked with Tan in the musical *the Wanderer*. Born in 1969, Chia had gained profit and fame for his composing projects with well-known Mandarin pop singers, such as Nicholas Tse (1980-), Andy Lau (1961-) and Vivian Hsu (1975-).

In scene four, act nine of the play, before the life-or-death battle, the Black Devil slaughters maidens as sacrifices to evil spirit and lashes out “Mau Pa Chu Sa”, which is a curse and a command for mobilizing troops from the hell. Tan points out that “Mau Pa Chu Sa” is invented as a phonetic reversion of an anti-communist slogan staged by the KMT, “Sa Chu Pa Mau” in Mandarin (殺朱拔毛).⁴⁹ The inverted code reminds the audience of KMT’s despotism during the martial law days. More noteworthy, the distortion functions as mimicry of KMT’s propaganda and enhances de-colonizing irony and counteraction.⁵⁰

Similar to *A Supplementary History of My Homeland*, *Blitzkrieg* Siraya gives vivid representations of Sirayan females. Bou-hun, the Sirayan heroine and an embodiment of Sirayan femininities, is portrayed as being strong, straightforward and skillful in knifing. Her character forms a sharp contrast with images of Han women, who are portrayed as being foot-bound, weak, delicate, and submissive. In scene one of act four, the moment a male rascal harasses Bou-hun by stroking her arm, she reacts immediately by grabbing his hand and wrings it until it is almost fractured. In scene two of act six, when a Japanese pirate who belongs to the Black Devil’s gang flirts with her and asks for her name, Bou-hun retorts, “my last name is Your, first name, Great Grand Mother”, which derives from a Tai-gi swearword “Lin Chou Ma”. In the final wedding scene, Bou-hun tells her lover, a Han male Koan Che-bun, that according to Siraya’s matrifocal custom, he does not need to bring any “dowry”, “I’m truly in love with you. Come on, just marry over!”⁵¹ The joking remark creates inverted irony. It reminds Chinese Han’s male-centric marital custom that fetishes women and requires a bride to bring plenty of marriage portions to her husband’s home while she “marries over”. With the reversed condition that a male “marries over” to his wife’s household, and that the wife demands no dowry, Siraya’s matrifocal culture is highlighted and contrasts with Han patriarchal marital practices.

⁴⁹ The Mandarin slogan “Sa Chu Pa Mau” literally means “to kill Chu and to root out Mau”. Chu and Mau are referred to Chu Te and Mau Tze-tong, who were Chinese communist leaders during the rise of the People’s Republic of China.

⁵⁰ In postcolonial studies, irony produced by mimicry is initially pinpointed by Homi Bhabha. He states that when a colonized person mimics behavior of the colonial authorities, the disparities between the two create ambivalence and tension. If the imitator intends to ridicule the colonizers, the mimicry poses an anti-colonial gesture (Bhabha, 1983/1996: 360-367).

⁵¹ In Siraya’s matrifocal tradition, married couples practiced uxorilocal residence. A married woman did not move over to her husband’s household as what Chinese Han did. A married Sirayan woman still lived with her natal family. When the couple was still young, the husband undertook military training during the day and visited his wife at night. Their co-residence usually did not start until the husband reached the age 40 and retired from all of his communal obligations (Shepherd, 1995: 23-40).

Nevertheless, Tan Kian-seng acquiesces in the dominance of Chinese Han culture. Readdressing Sirayaness, he emphasizes that he has “no intension of replacing or toppling the hegemony of Han culture”. “I never mean to annoy the Han people and make them angry” he adds (ibid). The standpoint is expressed again in the two weddings at the end of the play. Marriage as a metaphor is frequently applied in national narratives as a symbol of national consolidation. The marital relationship implies that a nation is a mega family constituted by females and males and different classes and ethnic groups (Sommer, 1990: 82-90). With the two crisscrossed marital ties in terms of race and gender, Tan facilitates an “equivalent exchange” between Hans and Sirayans. In addition to fulfilling a dramatic climax, the weddings in the final scene signify a “national romance” and an “imagined solution” to the long-term ethnic conflicts that has tormented generations of Han and lowland indigenous descendents. Unlike Tan Lui’s explicit de-Han and de-sinicizing stance, Tan Kian-seng takes a milder approach. In *Blitzkrieg Siraya*, he tends to negotiate with the Chinese-Han mainstream through metaphorical marriages and displays them in a celebrating mood.

Tan Kian-seng’s pendulous positions on interethnicity and Sirayan femininity also emerge in other episodes of the play. In act six the Han heroine Tio Nga-eng is astonished when she passes by the study of her Sirayan lover Tong Bou-nia and sees many volumes of Han medicine classics. “Though you live in a remote village,” she says, “your remarks show that you have lots of knowledge, and you’re well-educated and cultured. I am greatly impressed. Now I know why. Your family has a close tie with the Han people!” Bou-nia replies, “Under Han dominance, Siraya as a lowland indigenous group should work hard and be resilient. Han culture has a long history. Many things about Han culture are worth studying.” (Tan, 2010: 84) The dialogue is filled with regional and ethnic prejudices. First of all, it presumes that people residing in rural areas are inferior to those living in metropolitans. Worse than this, the remark presumes that people associated with Chinese Han are more knowledgeable and “cultured”, and that the Sirayan group, represented by Bou-nia, seems to consent with such a bias, which signals a consensus to Chinese Han supremacy.

In fact, Sirayan forebears should have established a rich reservoir of knowledge about indigenous species, as they inhabited southern Taiwan for thousands of years and maintained a balanced relationship with nature. They should have accumulated abundant data about local biosphere and cultivated expertise in herbal medicine. However, in the play, only the advancement of Han medicine is highlighted, while Sirayan folk medicine is left unmentioned.

Secondly, although female roles are marked out, implicit discrimination against women still permeates through the script. In act six, when Tio Nga-eng reveals that she decides to stick with her Sirayan friends during the crisis of an impending destructive war launched by the Black Devil, and her Han male friend Koan Che-bun initially tries to dissuade her. Impressed with Tio's determination, Koan sighs and shouts, "Alas! I'm so ashamed, because I'm instructed what righteousness is and what friendship is by a woman!" (ibid: 109) In other words, Koan assumes that women are morally and intellectually inferior to males, and that accordingly women are not supposed to teach men. On the surface, it seems natural that Koan makes this remark in the context of a male-centric society two hundred years ago. Nevertheless, the play is produced in modern time. The playwright or producer could have managed to invert this statement or insert a criticism on the gender-biased words.

5.3 *The Big Harbor* (大港嘴)

Known as a "difficult" piece, *The Big Harbor* is distinguished for its style of extreme fragmentation and graphic psychological description. The author Oo Tiong-siong applies the fragmenting strategy to deconstruct lineal thinking of colonial macro-narratives. Deep psycho portrayal exposes colonial absurdity and the trauma that inflicts the colonized people. Some of its psychological sketches are so pathetic and penetrating that they seem to be close to the level of insanity and in a certain degree display anguish and spiritual distortion caused by repetitious colonial reigns. Notwithstanding, the end of the novel hints at a re-innovated lowland indigenous identity as a source of redemption from colonization.

Oo was born in 1973 in Lai-ui-a, Ko-hiong, where the Takau branch of Makattao used to dwell.⁵² He has been living there and works as a computer engineer. In the mid-1990s, while embarking on Mandarin creative writing, he was greatly distraught with Taiwan's history of multi-colonization and its aftereffects, which continued to haunt the Taiwanese people. Before 2000 his works were loaded with a dark, pessimistic tint. Inspired by lowland indigenous movements at that time, he began taking an interest in related issues. In 2000 Oo switched his writing language from Mandarin to his native tongue Tai-gi. Also around the time he converted

⁵² A lowland indigenous group, the Makattao people scatter around Ko-hiong, Pin-tong and the east coast. Takau is a Ko-hiong-based Makattao branch. Ko-hiong used to be called "Takau", which was obviously named after the Makattao people residing there. In the past Makattao was categorized as a branch of Siraya. In the recent decade, with the surge of ethnic consciousness, the Makattao people claim that they are an independent indigenous people. Culturally and linguistically Siraya and Makattao share some characteristics, and their habitations are close to each other. In some places, especially in the east coast, the two communities have been intermingling for over a century (Kan, 2006: 499).

from traditional Chinese Han belief to Christianity. Having gone through the changes, his works started to show a stream of “light”. In *the Big Harbor* he incorporates three elements, Christianity, lowland indigeneness, and vernacular as three dimensions of Taiwanese resurrection.

In terms of writing techniques, Oo is known as one of the few Tai-gi writers that are bold enough to try on the most “avant-garde” aesthetics of modern world literature. In addition to extreme fragmentation and detailed psychological depiction, he also applies with magic realism⁵³, stream of consciousness and hybridization of different forms, such as songs of Dao priests, legends, letters, and dialogues.

In regard to narrative style, as afore-mentioned, *the Big Harbor* features extreme fragmentation. The text does not contain traditional divisions of chapters or sections. The entire plot is torn apart into “shreds” of descriptions, episodes, soliloquies and dialogues without specifying the addressers. The passages are not arranged in chronological orders. From time to time a letter from a different type of characters pops up, indicating the narrator writes to an ex-girl friend to reveal his feelings. In the next passage another episode is inserted abruptly. Borrowing the schemes of post-structuralism, Oo describes psychological turmoil and fractured memory of the colonized by disrupting the lineal flow that colonial mega-narratives usually bear. The de-construction practice translates an effort of decolonization and leads to a prospect of reconstruction.

In terms of accessibility, however, extreme fragmentation makes reading *the Big Harbor* a painstaking job. If a reader does not read the preface before prying into the novel, it seems impossible to understand its content, not to mention enjoying it or appreciating its aesthetics. Although fragmentation as a strategy involves an attempt to challenge mega-narrative of colonial writing and to replace it with interwoven “minor-narratives”, such an aesthetic experiment may deter readers from continuing to read it, and as a result decreases its acceptability.

In 1998, Oo visited Pang-soh, a small fishing village in the west coast of Pin-tong.

⁵³ Originally magic realism is an aesthetics developed in Central and South Americas in the second half of the 20th century. Writers of the region seek inspiration from local mythology or folklore. They represent colonial realities in a dreamlike magic style to expose violent and unbalanced power relations between colonizers and the colonized. This technique is applied to ferment a revolutionary discourse and actualize postcolonial liberation (Liao, 2003: 155).

Pang-soh is actually a phonetic variation of Pangsoya. The village used to be the stronghold of the once-prosperous Pangsoya branch of Makattao and was named after the group.⁵⁴ Historically Pang-soh is an important passage of mass migration when lowland indigenes took their diasporic journey from Taiwan's southwest coastal plains to the foot of the Central Ridge or to the east coast. However, Oo was shocked by the deterioration of Pang-soh's current condition. Over-drainage of ground water led to the sinking of the ground level. As a consequence Pang-soh was frequently flooded during the typhoon season when sea waves surged and engulfed the entire village. Nowadays Pang-soh has a shrinking population and a barren landscape. More alarmingly, the local people barely retained any knowledge about their Makattao forebears. Inquired by Oo, they made up various origins of the place, all of which had nothing to do with lowland indigenes. Oo was dismayed at the extension of their collective amnesia of history.

Setting Pang-soh as a spatial background, Oo wrote a Mandarin novel, *Black Ghosts Harbor*, about lowland indigenous people, and completed it in 2000. Nevertheless he did not have it published, as he thought the content was too "dark". In 2008, Oo was awarded a grant by National Culture and Arts Foundation and started to adapt *Black Ghosts Harbor* into a Tai-gi fiction and renamed it *the Big Harbor*. In the Tai-gi version, he induced elements of Christianity as a spiritual source and healing power. The Tai-gi novel was published in 2010 (interview with Oo on March 30, 2012).

Oo must tackle the controversy over the role of Christianity in Taiwan's colonial history. The religion was introduced to Taiwan by Dutch Missionaries when the Dutch colonial rule was established in the 17th century. At that time many Sirayans were converted, and nowadays the church continues playing an active role in Sirayan communities. In fact the Christian belief even becomes a signifier of Siraya identity.⁵⁵ Notwithstanding, Dutch missionaries were involved in bloody military expeditions against Sirayans and other lowland indigenous groups.

⁵⁴ Makattao in Pin-tong is divided into two branches: Taccariangh in the north and Pangsoya in the south. The names of the branches are recorded in Dutch Formosa archives.

⁵⁵ The Christian tradition was interrupted after the Dutch regime was defeated by Koxinga and forced to leave Taiwan in 1662. The religion was introduced to Taiwan again in the late 19th century by Scottish (at that time English) and Canadian Presbyterian missionaries. According to accounts of then pastors, such as William Cambridge, George Barclay and George Mackay, lowland indigenes tended to accept Christianity whole-heartily while Han people took an antagonistic attitude against the "western" religion (Loa, 1995: 1-27, 63-66, 87-96, 217-238). According to my field studies in Kong-a-na, Tai-lam and Bak-sa, Ko-hiong in 2010 and 2011, even up to decades ago Christian Sirayans were still nicknamed "Christian Hoan", which means "Christian barbarians". Apparently, the Christian belief becomes a marker to distinguish Sirayans from Han in Sirayan-Han-mingled regions, and local Sirayans are happy to embrace Christianity as an essential part of their identity.

Facing the historical reality, Oo acknowledges that the Dutch missionaries had a share of the “wage” of colonial sin, but on the other hand, he eulogizes their contributions to Taiwan, such as the introduction of science, technology and Romanized orthography.⁵⁶ More importantly, when encountering the current Chinese-Han hegemony, Oo takes the Christian belief as a resource of de-colonizing resistance, and affiliates it with indigenes as he thinks that Christianity has a share of reshaping Sirayanness (ibid).

Now Oo claims himself “a descendent of lowland indigene reborn through Christianity”. He confesses that being dubbed as a Han descendent used to make him uneasy, afflicting him with a strong sense of guilt whenever he recalled Taiwan’s multi-colonial history and what lowland indigenes had endured. However, the newly-acquired lowland indigenous identity opens up new possibilities in his life. Furthermore, Christianity gives him the courage to face the colonial atrocities that his Han ancestors had committed, helping him handle the impacts of colonization. Because of the faith, he says a heavy burden on his mind is laid down. Despite shortage of any evidence to prove his bio-liaison with lowland indigenes, he is elated to re-imagine a lowland indigenous ancestry. In *the Big Harbor*, re-addressing the distortion and suffering caused by colonization, he also reveals a stream of decolonizing twilight through portrayals of lowland indigenous protagonists and Christian agents (ibid).

The fiction takes the form of Odyssey-style exodus and the self-exploration of *Bildungsroman*.⁵⁷ It starts with a journey of a narrator, a first persona and young male. Based on his mother’s limited description and an old photograph, the young man goes to a withering fishing village, supposedly his birthplace, to seek his father. Talking to various villagers, the narrator re-structures the shredded information they provide, and gradually puts back missing pieces of his life. Eventually he resolves the riddle about his interracial ancestry, which epitomizes the intertwined relationships between colonizers and the colonized in Taiwan’s modern history. From the beginning to the end, Oo does not give the narrator’s name, which suggests that Taiwanese identity is blurred in the repeated historical (mis)representations masterminded by the colonizers. At the end the narrator decides to retrieve a lowland

⁵⁶ The Dutch missionaries belonged to the Calvin reformed church. They started preaching the gospel in Sinkan Sirayan villages and extended their missionary work to other tribes of the Four Big Villages. Sinkan is the most “Christianized” Sirayan community. In 1659, 83% of Sinkan villagers were converted (Li, 2003: 17). Up to now the church in Sinkan communities still retains a big congregation and it plays an active role of mobilizing Sirayan believers to join in the revitalization of lowland Austronesian peoples.

⁵⁷ *Bildungsroman* is also called initiation novel, apprenticeship novel or novel of formation. Works of this genre tell about the life story of a protagonist who experiences ups and downs and eventually acquires wisdom or epiphany (Cheung, 2005: 35-37).

indigenous identity—to “redeem a lowland indigenous name”, as a resort to transcend agony in his personal life and hints at healing of Taiwan’s collective colonial trauma.

At a young age the narrator was taken away from his home village Oo-soh Harbor by his mother Kim-chhe, who decided to leave her cruel, estranged husband Li Lok. A brutish person, Li embodies multi-colonial trauma that poisons the soul of the colonized. He was conceived after his mother was raped by a Japanese officer during the Pacific War. His grandmother had also been sexually assaulted in a muddy vegetable plot by an anti-Japanese Taiwanese guerrilla leader and was forced to marry him as a concubine. According to morals of feminine chastity of their days, such “infamy” of his family elders made Li a target of ridicule in his home village. Painful childhood experiences of poverty and humiliation forges Li’s coldblooded personality. He leads a gang, masterminds foul plays, ravages the local villagers, and indulges himself in wanton sex, drug addiction and killings. Driven by an impulse of revenge, he seduces the wives of his opponents, kidnaps the daughter of an archenemy and forces her to marry his son out of wedlock. It turns out that the young girl is his biological daughter and the half-sister of his son. The incestuous tie ends with dual tragedies—Li’s daughter(-in-law) hangs herself in the woods, while his son is slain with a knife and dumped naked. Eventually Li Lok is trapped in an abyss of fear, hallucination and hopelessness.

In the fiction, Oo gave much description of the decaying fishing village, which mirrors the psychography of the colonized. The scenes seem gruesome and surrealistic:

In front of the empty harbor a few withered huts stand tilting. Behind them spread several houses made of lagoon. Their rooftops float in mud, covered by long, odorous weed...in gusts, the copper-colored sea is quiet, and then turns pale, as if there were no waves. Some fishing boats huddle in the pier and tilt, as if they were deserted for long...Off the shore the broken masts and wood pieces squeak, drifting with torrents. The wet pier collapses. Particles of salt twinkle in the cracks in the twilight of sunset...It starts to rain in the harbor for 81 days, and makes the villagers lose any hope of seeing the sunshine again. The torrential rains engulf every corner of the village. Finally the whole village is swallowed by tidal waves. Then the corpse of a drunkard was brushed onto the shore by huge waves. (Oo, 2010: 22-23)

To convey multi-layered symbolic meanings, Oo applies interfused metaphorical and imagery structure. The narrator’s trek back to his hometown hints at a process of

self-exploration and psychological maturing and an attempt to find one's "root" and the meaning of life. His spiritual journey is greatly involved with the ocean, which on the one hand stands for origins of life, abundance, and liberation. On the other hand, the ocean is associated with unfathomable terror, catastrophes, suffering, and an existence too powerful to be controlled by humankind. Furthermore, the ocean has a close tie with lowland indigenes. Belonging to the Austronesian mega-family, lowland indigenes used to steer canoes and cruise along islands around Taiwan.⁵⁸

Another metaphor related to the sea is the harbor. Similarly, the harbor conveys plural connotations. It is a location where different elements, whether global or local, are juxtaposed and cultural hybridization is fermented. Apart from this, it is an entry of colonial disaster, and an outlet of the intertwined complexes of love and hatred that is accumulated in the village for generations.

Gradually the narrator discovers that the mistreated young woman is his half-sister fathered by Li, while his biological father is a lowland indigenous fisher Phoann Chong-po. Honest and kind, Phoann is the sole lover of the narrator's mother and a prisoner of consciousness in the martial law era. Furthermore, the narrator learns that all of the residents in his home village are both relatives and enemies with entangled ties of love and venom. During the long process of multi-colonization, their roles are repeatedly transposed as oppressors, accomplices and victims. In some occasions they play dual or even all of the roles simultaneously. The intertwined relations within a clan and between the villagers mirror Taiwan's experience of multi-colonization. More than this, the villagers suffer from deep self-doubt and a strong sense of emptiness, since their collective memory and identity as a lowland indigenous group has been diluted.

Afterwards the narrator hears that Phoann plans to take a voyage to Lamay, an isle off Taiwan's southwest coast, to trace his Sirayan ancestry.⁵⁹ In the 17th century Lamey was

⁵⁸ The Austronesians, including lowland indigenes of Taiwan, were the most widely dispersed ethnolinguistic population. The ranges of their canoe trips reach Easter Island, New Zealand and even crossing over the Pacific to reach Madagascar off the shore of the Indian Ocean in Africa. Taiwan is the furthest northern tip of their navigation (Bellwood, 2000: 337-343). During my field trips, I find that some Sirayan tribes still hold ocean-related worship. For instance, in Kapuasuah, which is a village in the hilly inland of east Tai-lam, Sirayan descendents hold a sea memorial ritual to commemorate the events that their ancestors survived shipwrecks in the ocean and reached the coastal plain of southwest Taiwan. In Hoan-a-un, a Soulang Sirayan village in the west coast of Tai-lam, a boat-burning ritual is held annually to pay tribute to Sirayan forebears.

⁵⁹ In documents of Dutch Formosa, "Lamay" is actually called "Tugin", "Lamey", "Lambay" or "Gouden Leeuwseylant" (Golden Lion Island) (Campbell, 1903/1967: 14). Perhaps Oo deliberately creates a

conquered by the Dutch troops with the help of their Sirayan and Makattao allies. The whole island was burnt down. Nearly all of the residents were killed. The few Lamay survivors were said to be replaced in the East Indies and Sirayan villages in southwest Taiwan.⁶⁰

In the meanwhile the narrator decides to leave behind all of the mishaps, unresolved conflicts of his parents' and grand parents' generations and entangled sentiments of love and bitterness. He inclines to seek a future by reclaiming a history of Siraya and a Sirayan identity. Boarding a sailboat, he leaves for Lamay with Phoann and his companions. The voyage symbolizes a probe into his spiritual origin and a quest for the meaning of life, which also unfolds a healing process of decolonization.

The sailboat is called *Nanang*, which means “the name” in the Sirayan language. The passage highlights once again that the future of Sirayan descendents lies in the retrieval of their “name”, which culminates in the resurrection of their identity. On *Nanang* the narrator writes a letter to his former lover, revealing his experience of spiritual catharsis:

The ocean bathes me. The boat braves through waves in a rainy night. The past looks like a dream. Is the past of the past a dream within a dream? Where does the boat *Nanang* take me to? I have no idea. However, I will know about it someday...Our bereft homeland should be restored as it was. We should cling to memory of painful realities...I am transformed into a homebound salmon. The strength of my entire life just sustains a trek back to my origin...T's the place that gave me birth and nurture. This is about the entire battle of my life...A minute ago, the man Phoann Bun-tat brought to me a clean shirt, asking me to get changed. He did not speak much, but I sensed something unique in his sight...He told me to turn back, and I saw mountains over the sea level, tall, stout and solid, immersed in the tranquil moonlight. It seems they are expecting something...I remember words of an old pastor: Noah's Ark exists in every age, in every strike of floods. Now the Ark is buttressing me, carrying me forwards. (Oo, 2010: 194-195)

phonetically-close “pseudo name” to increase the legendary aura of the fiction. Likewise the spatial setting of the fiction, Oo-soh, is an adaptation from the real place name Pang-soh.

⁶⁰ According to Kan Keng-jin's research, archeological evidence shows that the forebears of Lamay are culturally linked with Siraya. Besides, it is recorded in *De Dagregisters van het kasteel zeelandia* that in 1636 the Dutch mounted a military action against Lamay with the allies of Siryan and Makattao tribes, including the branch of Four Big Villages, Taccariangh and Pangsoya. After the conquest, 714 Lamay survivors were sent to Zeelandia, 523 to Sinkan villages in Tai-lam, while the other 191 were dispatched to Batavia (Kan, 2006: 497-529).

In the Old Testament of the Bible, Noah's ark is a symbol of salvation from cataclysm. With the metaphor, Oo implies that through the recovery of lowland indigenous consciousness and the Christian belief come forth personal and communal catharsis and transcendence over anguish triggered by colonization.

The three pieces discussed above demonstrate great variedness and potentialities of Siraya writing in Tai-gi literature. Despite some problems, it provides evidence that the redefining of Sirayanness and Taiwanness is a ceaseless effort, always pending revision, rather than confined to a fixed entity or frame. Aside from cultivating a new terrain of aesthetics, the salience of Siraya represents a collective political action of Tai-gi writers, expressing that literature and other forms of art can take the mandate of participating in the creation of an interethnic and trans-ethnic new Taiwan value.

6. Coda: Toward a Multiethnic Taiwan with Solid Indigenous Heritages

Since the 2000s, Tai-gi literary works encircling Siraya have increased remarkably. The phenomenon proclaims not only a shift of artistic disposition but also a social action to deconstruct the dominant Chinese-Han-centric ideology. More significantly such a de-constructing endeavor embraces a vision of reconstructing a new discursive field that is grounded on Taiwan and her abundant ethnic-lingual cultures, among which lowland indigenous dynamics play a crucial part.

Rearticulating Siraya in contemporary Tai-gi literature marks self-empowerment of the Taiwanese people. Writing about Siraya in their native tongue, Tai-gi writers re-create collective (counter)memories of a repressed language and a repressed people, starting a decolonization process and a cure of long-term psychological infliction. Such an effort also points to the re-erection of Taiwan's historicity and subjecthood, premiering a transformation of Taiwan identity—shifting from the Chinese-Han-centric framework toward a broader dimension of a multi-ethnic nation with solid indigenous heritages.

The prevalence of Siraya writing in contemporary Tai-gi literature demonstrates how identity politics is co-constituted with and by different agents of a society and how literary trends interact with the current structure of feeling. In the meantime the phenomenon

witnesses that Taiwan has the potential for developing local postcolonial studies—transforming and transcending the pains of multi-colonization into fruitful fields of research and creative practices.

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當代台語文學的 Siraya 書寫：以《鄉史補記》、 《決戰西拉雅》及《大港嘴》為中心

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摘 要

21 世紀初以來 Siraya 書寫蔚為台語文學的一股風潮，以 Siraya 平埔族為主題的台語作品日益增加，文類及風格亦愈加多樣化。台語雖然是台灣的本土語言之一，而且七成以上的台灣民眾以台語為母語，它卻向來被視為「低階語言」，直到最近數十年，台語族群才展開母語復興運動。Siraya 族的境遇與台語類似，這個原居於台南的平埔原住民族，一向被主流社會排擠，然而自從 1990 年代以來 Siraya 族裔推動復振運動，至今仍持續不輟。台語文學和 Siraya，一屬母語文創作，另一則屬族群議題，這兩者如何串聯，進而形成一個新的論述空間？Siraya 書寫對於台語文學以及台灣現今的政治、社會發展可能產生哪些影響？

本論文首先探討 Siraya 意識形成的歷史因素，繼而分析認同政治與台語文學中 Siraya 書寫興起的關聯性。此外，論文中討論三部有關 Siraya 的台語文作品，都是以 Siraya 人的經驗為基礎來重建台灣的歷史，並挑戰以中國——漢人為主體的主流歷史架構。

Siraya 在台語文學中的「高曝光率」涵蓋多重意義。重新書寫 Siraya 彰顯一種新的社會運動，開展一個新視野，表達台灣人試圖將台灣建構為具有豐饒原住民文化元素的多元族群國家想像。

關鍵字：Siraya、多重殖民、台語、國族認同、族群相互性