# From Rekai to Labelabe: Disaster and relocation on the example of Kucapungane, Taiwan

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## Abstract

The long-standing interdependent relationship between indigenous peoples and their land includes a community's life experiences, material culture and collective memory. Once they are removed from their ancestral living space and traditional territory, livelihoods as well as interpersonal relationships are difficult to maintain. History has shown that relocation not only affects space, productivity and social structure, but it also has effects on cultural preservation. After the 2009 Typhoon Morakot, the Taiwanese government relocated three indigenous villages: Dashe, Majia, and Haocha, to an area of about 30 hectares. At present the area, now christened Rinari, has a total population of approximately 1,500 people and is the most populous indigenous community in Taiwan. Using the Rinari community's Haocha Village (Kucapungane) as a case study site, this paper examines conflict and social vulnerability as it is brought about by relocation. In the case of Kucapungane, this is not the first time that the village has been relocated, and many resettlement policies appear to be constructed around the same notions as earlier relocation efforts: the government continues to believe that simply providing indigenous disaster victims with a safe place of residence is sufficient. Our research suggests that relocation methods should be reviewed, and due consideration be given to land, culture, education, and economic livelihood issues in newly established areas. Policies that determine fundamental considerations and make use of detailed assessments to carry out practices may minimise the negative impacts of relocation and resettlement on indigenous cultural survival and form a base for cultural development.

KEYWORDS: natural disaster, indigenous, reconstruction, vulnerability, Morakot

## Introduction: Post-typhoon Morakot

On August 8, 2009, Typhoon Morakot brought more than 2 metres of rainfall to Taiwan, resulting in landslides and flooding throughout the southern and central regions, and leaving 699 dead or missing and 1,866 houses destroyed. As the deadliest typhoon to hit Taiwan in its history, Morakot had a significant socio-cultural and economic impact: rivers flooded to cover a total area of about 13,304 hectares, 140,424 households were flooded under 50 cm or more of water, and agricultural losses amounted to NT $27.94

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billion. In response to this disaster, on August 27, the Legislative Yuan passed the *Special Act for Typhoon Morakot Post-Disaster Reconstruction* (hereinafter referred to as the *Special Act*) to cope with recovery and reconstruction. In accordance with Article 20 of the Special Act, both local and central governments must negotiate with residents to reach a consensus before designating areas as "special zones", which would permit residence to be restricted and villages relocated from these zones. The delineation of these areas has led to escalated controversy in the relocation of indigenous villages and brought about serious challenges regarding development.

According to the *Foreign Ethnic Group Investigative Report*, a number of factors contributed to indigenous migration in the past, including 1) recurring disease or mortality, 2) being impoverished or solitary and unable to maintain a home, 3) being located too close to enemy territory or otherwise dangerous terrain, or 4) having arable land turned unsuitable for farming or with insufficient yield (Academia Sinica Institute of Ethnology 2004:9). Regardless of the reason, the migration of early indigenous peoples in Taiwan was largely autonomous and less due to external influences until the Dutch colonial period, upon which the relocation and amalgamation of settlements began to occur on a larger scale (Tadao 1987; Ushinosuke 2000; Wei & Wang 1966. In later years, indigenous peoples were forced to move from their territory because of the *Develop the Mountains and Pacify the Aborigines* policy implemented during the Qing Dynasty,[1] and during the Japanese colonial period they were relocated in large groups from high up in the mountains to more accessible locations for easier and more centralised management (Yinengjiaju 1999; Wang 2000; Huang 1996). The Japanese colonial methods were subsequently copied by the Chinese Nationalist Party (*Kuomintang*), which used their Shandi Pingdi Hua policy to 'make the mountains more like the plains' (Liao 1984) and their *Mountain Modernisation* policy as an excuse to move indigenous peoples from their traditional territory. These successive waves of colonisation led to rapid changes in indigenous society and brought about tremendous difficulties in material culture and spiritual life for indigenous Taiwanese (Chen & Su 2004). In recent years, frequent natural disasters have caused serious destruction, to the point where relocation must be faced yet again. In this context, post-Typhoon Morakot relocation and reconstruction can be seen as a common issue of concern not only for the indigenous people of Taiwan, but also indigenous communities throughout the world. This article focuses on Haocha Village (Kucapungane) in the Rinari community in order to investigate the problems pertaining to power and culture that arise from relocation.

[1] For example, in 1878 (4th year of Emperor Guangxu's rule), the Kavalan and Sakizaya tribes had serious conflict with the Qing, resulting in the so-called Jialiwan Incident. After the incident, the Qing army entered Sakizaya and Kavalan tribal lands and designated it government territory, forcing them to discontinue farming, and into exile, leaving their homeland and losing their culture (Kang 1998).

## Anthropological approaches to disaster research

Human society is presently facing unprecedented challenges with the acceleration of climate change and environmental degradation. In keeping with the principles of working towards a sustainable society and for the benefit of humanity, the scope of discussions about natural disasters and extreme weather have become increasingly broad and global in context (Hewitt 1983; Oliver-Smith & Hoffman 1999; Wisner et al.1994). Disaster research in the social sciences began relatively late, emerging towards the end of World War II. In the 1950s, structural functionalism saw disaster as an unpredictable "abnormal event", so the focus was more on how to recover social composition after the disaster. Individual and organisational behaviour were seen as constant variables, thus neglecting the socio-cultural impacts of disaster. It was not until the rise of cultural ecology in the 1960s that the interpretation of disaster gradually shifted from "abnormal" to being considered a "normal" process in the long-term interaction between human society and the natural environment, and an integral part of socio-cultural change despite the significant damage it caused. Developing the disposition and ability to adapt to the environment and cope with disaster was key to cultural continuity; as Schneider (1957: 14) pointed out:

> before colonialisation, globalisation, and other interferences, many communities had knowledge and strategies to deal with the nature of their physical platform, to the extent that a disaster, at least up to certain extremes, might not even constitute a 'disaster' to them, but simply part of their lifeways and experience.

Until the 1980s, anthropological disaster research was influenced by the structural Marxism and political economy schools of thought from the 1970s and focused on how to effectively put capitalism into practice to develop modern states and used "history" to explain societal changes. The root cause of disasters was seen as societal rather than natural (Ortner 1984). At this point, anthropologists began to view disaster as a process of social change, and the underlying factors of social structure and power. At disaster locations, anthropologists uncovered large-scale social mobilisation and natural resource allocation issues at not just the local level, but also influenced and constrained by national, and even international, forces. Disasters can reveal the complex structural relationship of local and national markets, as well as the society's internal resource allocation methods in the face of disaster, as related to age, gender, and inter-ethnic cooperation and conflict.

The perspectives of both cultural ecology or political economy approaches in analysing power structures significantly contributed to the advance of anthropological disaster research. Cultural ecology, however, is confined to explaining disaster at the local level, with disaster simplified as a cultural problem, while ignoring the link with the outside world and placing less emphasis on cultural practices and mutual influence. The political economy school of thought emphasises the interaction between local society and external systems as well the underlying power structures regarding disaster, but in considering issues related to power and politics, neglects the cultural aspects of disaster. Producing an active dialogue between these two disaster research approaches with emphasis placed at different levels is rather difficult. In the face of today's ecological

disasters and environmental destruction, we are unable to grasp and understand disasters through local cultural experiences alone; however, ignoring disaster experiences at the community level separates the disaster from reality and overlooks the contributions of traditional knowledge that correspond to disaster.

## Disaster social vulnerability

In the 1990s, despite disaster research gradually increasing in scientific fields, it was difficult to produce a unified definition of disaster. Despite the categorisation of disasters as either natural or social, a significant number of disaster incidents, or hazards, are human adaptation to the natural environment as a normal phenomenon, and do not necessarily constitute losses of lives and property. Anthony Oliver-Smith defines disaster as a force, technology or conditions sufficient to cause damage to the social infrastructure or the environment, which leads to an event that involves a combination of a potentially destructive agent from the natural or technological sphere and a population in a socially produced condition of vulnerability (Oliver-Smith & Hoffman 1999: 4). Anthony Oliver-Smith wrote, based on his own experiences:

> Regarding disaster, people often make such assumptions: first, there is a region of disaster; second, the world owes humanitarian assistance to people in disaster areas; third, disaster is the ending. People believe that when a disaster occurs, the next step is to provide tents, blankets, medicines and food. I do not ... my disaster research is focused almost exclusively on the recovery and reconstruction phase.

In his view, the disaster relief process cannot be simply described as tents, blankets, medicines, food, etc. The most complex aspect of relief work, the longest, most expensive and volatile stage of recovery and reconstruction, is closely related to ethnicity, class, gender, and disaster assistance methods; i.e. the long-term effects on the victims (Oliver-Smith 2002).

Disaster leads to socio-cultural changes, which accelerate environmental vulnerability; the intertwining factors have a significant impact on social mores, economy, and traditional concepts. Definition of disaster can be even more systematic; Wisner et al. put forth that disaster is built on three interrelating elements, namely: hazard, risk, and vulnerability. The hazard is the physical factors in a disaster, and may be predicted through statistical study. Risk is 'a compound function of this complex (but knowable) natural hazard and the number of people characterised by their varying degrees of vulnerability who occupy the space and time of exposure to extreme events' (Wisner et al. 1994: 21). Vulnerability is derived from historical processes of human vulnerability; that is, the vulnerability of human society generates disaster, or leads to more serious disaster.

According to Wisner et al., disaster stems from fundamental causes, historically and structurally rooted in the cultural context of any society. Consequentially, finding the root cause of the disaster is especially salient (1994) in reducing vulnerability to disasters and the way to prevent future disasters. Their socio-cultural perspective is inspired by cultural geographer Kenneth Hewitt, who found that despite disaster research

flourishing in the 1990s, disasters themselves continued to occur and with even more frequency as time passed. Hewitt believed that disaster research had failed to get to the core of the issue, and overlooked the fundamental causes of disasters. He believed that if a disaster did not have an effect on at least a part of a society it could not be regarded as a "disaster". Also, if, "society" could not be included as a factor in a disaster research project in academic research, he proposed that it was likely that mistakes made in former approaches, which were wrong about the causes and effect of the disaster process, would be repeated. Hewitt consequently called for disaster research to pay more attention to the social environment rather than the natural environment of the disaster (1983). In the 1990s, Wisner et al. continued Hewitt's argument, stating that not just natural events give rise to disasters, rather, a disaster is a social, political and economic environment, and it is these factors which constitute the lifestyles of different groups of people. In short, disaster anthropology considers disaster to be a process rather than an event.

The historical context of disaster must also be considered because natural disasters are influenced by natural, political, economic and social factors. Therefore, their occurrence cannot be solely attributed to reasons such as wind, geology, or rainfall. Disasters come about with the uneven distribution of rights, social inequality, and unbalanced economic development. With this in perspective, this study investigates a disaster site in an attempt to discuss the significance of space to the community and also uses internal viewpoints as a discussion of post-disaster government actions regarding resettlement, relocation, and other issues of political significance. Why did the state, in its attempt to protect indigenous peoples, promote the continuation of cultural traditions, tribal integrity and sustainable development through relocation and the provision of permanent housing, not only fail to get the support of tribesmen, but also end up as the target criticism and backlash among the community? When disaster strikes, how can the residents of a community reorganise and mobilise? In what ways does disaster reconstruction play a role in restoring their lives? To what extent do disaster mitigation efforts affect culture?

## Research methods

I am from Haocha and experienced the village's first relocation in 1977. In the following years, I was also present for several key occurrences in Haocha's history.[2] This study used these years of participation and observation and Haocha's historical documents along with indigenous relocation policy-relevant findings to examine the socio-cultural impact of state involvement in tribal affairs. Newspapers, research reports and in-person interviews were used to assess the typhoon's spatial, political, and cultural impact, as well as gain further understanding of the post-disaster situation.

[2] In 1992 I served as Haocha Community Development Association personnel, during the Haocha Majiia Reservoir protest, and efforts to rebuild Old Haocha, and in 1996 also experienced the impact that Typhoon Herb had on Haocha.

The data collection phase of this research pertaining to before and after Morakot[3] was made possible with support from the National Science Council, the main government agency responsible for promoting and funding science research in Taiwan, and other projects. I attended village meetings, official and private negotiation talks, academic symposiums, and NGO conferences during the course of the study. For the field interviews, I conducted in-depth interviews with residents of the community. The interviewed people included: community leaders (subjects included the village chief, members of the nobility, mayor/village heads, representatives, chairmen of community-based organisations), intellectual elites (subjects included township office staff, and village officials, church pastors, primary school teachers, YMCA members) and general population (mainly the Haocha villagers).

When participating in public meetings, a digital recorder, camera, and video camera were used to capture data. Interviews arranged with specific subjects first obtained the party's consent to recording and photography; if criticism of the government or certain individuals came up, subjects were then asked whether they wanted their statement to be open or anonymous in order to ensure that theirs rights and interests were preserved. The interviews were conducted in the hope of understanding and interpreting the appropriateness of the policies and laws from the perspective of the respondents, and distinguishing any possible discrimination they experienced in the village relocation and resettlement process.

## Where is home? Rinari's ethnic composition and spatial characteristics

After Typhoon Morakot, according to the provisions of the Special Act, the government conducted *Indigenous Territory and Village Safety Examinations*. In Pingtung County, the following areas were affected and/or determined to be unfit for living: Wutai Township: Ali, Jilu, Jiamu, Yila, Haocha Villages; Mudan Township: Gaoshi and Zhongjianlu Villages; Sandimen Township: Dewen, Dalai, and Dashe Villages; Taiwu Township: Taiwu Village; Laiyi Township: Yilin, Dahou, Laiyi (West), Laiyi (East), and Danlin Villages; Majia Township: Majia Village; Manzhou Township: Changle Village. All or part of these villages had to be relocated, and after several months of investigation and consultation, the government commissioned the Buddhist Compassion Relief Tzu Chi Foundation, World Vision Taiwan and the ROC Red Cross Society and other non-governmental organisations to build permanent housing. These organisations then built permanent housing to provide placement for disaster victims. Those assigned housing at Changzhi Baihe Community and Majia Farm[4] moved in on August 6, 2009 and December 21, 2009 respectively.

[3] Morakot occurred on August 8, 2009, but at the time Haocha residents had already been relocated to Ailiao Military Camp area in Linluo Township because of Typhoon Sepat in 2007. During this period, I participated in the resettlement process, also joining the planning of NTU's Graduate Institute Foundation, which was responsible for deciding on Rinari as the relocation base.

[4] Majia Farm held a moving in ceremony on December 25, 2010 and was renamed Rinari, which means 'We work together' in the Paiwan language.

Rinari is located in north of Majia Township's Beiye Village on a site of roughly 100.8 hectares. In the past, the area was the traditional territory of the Butsul subgroup of the Paiwan tribe and was later owned by the Taiwan Sugar Corporation. After Typhoon Morakot, the government organised the construction of permanent housing on the site and arranged for Majia, Dashe, and Haocha Villages to be relocated to this location. The first two villages are Paiwan; the latter is Rukai, one of another ethnic group in Taiwan. Dashe falls under the jurisdiction of Sandimen Township, and Majia and Haocha fall under Majia and Wutai Township, respectively. However, although Dashe and Majia both belong to the Paiwan tribe, the Raval group (which Dashe is classified as) and the Butsul group have different cultural and tribal origins. The Haocha Rukai belongs to the West Rukai classification (Ailiao) and have even greater linguistic, cultural, and tribal characteristics than exist between the Dashe and Butsul villagers.

## Haocha village affliction and disaster

Haocha is the only Rukai village within the Rinari community. Old Haocha was originally at an elevation of 950 meters, but during the surrender of Taiwan by Japan to the Kuomintang (Chinese Nationalist Party), residents gradually began moving away for because of difficult transportation and a lack of arable land in the mountainous terrain. During a village meeting in 1974, a majority of residents voted to relocate, and in 1978, the village was moved to the mesa on the left bank of the South Ailiao River at an elevation of about 230 meters and only 11 km from the plains. This place was called New Haocha, and the original site became Old Haocha.

In July 1996, Typhoon Herb hit New Haocha Village, and heavy rain in the mountains above the village caused a landslide that resulted in the destruction of four houses and the death of four villagers. In July 2006, after Typhoon Bilis destroyed Haocha Bridge, the village's main transportation outlet, the government constructed a new metal bridge. On August 13, 2007, Typhoon Wuti brought strong southwesterly winds and torrential rain. At around four p.m., the entire mountainside shifted, causing Haocha Elementary School as well as nearby houses to be buried. In total, 16 houses were totally buried, five partially collapsed, 16 flooded with sludge water, and two lives lost. On August 15, Typhoon Sepat hit the village and damaged two more houses and the fire station, and the Air Force dispatched helicopters to rescue the villagers and temporarily relocate them to various churches and the nearby Neipu Agricultural Industrial Vocational High School. Haocha's 137 households (165 people) were completely evacuated. At that time, even more villagers were at home because of preparations for the harvest festival to be held on August 14$^{th}$ and15$^{th}$. On September 2, 2007, the first batch of 20 households (56 people) was moved to the Ailiao military camp area in Linluo Township, Pingtung County.

The Pingtung County government commissioned experts to assess and recommend potential courses of action. During the National Pingtung University of Science and Technology and government-sponsored Second Conference Regarding the Reconstruction of Haocha Village (National Pingtung University of Science and Technology 2007), it was pointed out that (according to the Ministry of Economic Affairs'

Water Resources Agency's statistics) since 2005 the rainfall in New Haocha Village had exceeded the highest annual average rainfall of the past 30 years (1977 to 2006). In July 2005, the amount of rainfall was 2,630 mm, seven times the average annual rainfall of the previous 30 years (during Typhoon Haitang), and in July 2006, rainfall totals were 2486 mm. In August 2007, rainfall equalled 3,172mm, 3.6 times the average annual rainfall of the past 30 years, and from August 13 to 31 alone, there was 1,000 mm of rainfall. The surge in rainfall can be attributed to climate change, and brought about soil erosion in the land above New Haocha Village and resulted in landslides as well as the blockage of South Ailiao River.

After August 13, hundreds of people were temporarily moved to the barracks at the Ailiao military camp. This stage caused the villagers to remain in a state of confusion because of their inability to settle in a place they considered home. Although the military did its best to be accommodate the villagers, it operated essentially via centralised management, which villages had to suffer along with confined quarters, (an entire household was only allowed a single room of only around 12 square meters) poor internal ventilation, shared kitchen and bathrooms, and poor sanitary conditions. Those who endured that period suffered from severe stress and anxiety and found it hard to imagine the future. On August 8, 2009, floods and landslides brought by Typhoon Morakot buried the entirety of the remainder of New Haocha. After three years of waiting, in December 2010, Haocha Village's 177 households (416 people) finally moved into permanent housing at Rinari.

Rinari encompasses a total area of 27.8 hectares (buildings cover 11.28 hectares) with a population density of about 30 to 40 households per hectare. Houses were built from lightweight steel, and each home has two floors of about 105 square meters in size. The cost of manufacturing each house was about NT$150 million. All public construction projects after housing were expected to be completed by September 2011. They include a Reconstruction Livelihood Centre and Disaster Preparedness Classroom, Cultural Art Gallery and Library, Youth Activity Centres, seven churches, Children's Music Education Classroom, ancestral spiritual memorial, workshops, detention wetlands pools, agricultural areas, etc. In addition to supervising construction projects, the World Vision International will continue to utilise a Life Rebuilding Centre and offer "village industry development" services to assist villagers in finding occupations.

## Protecting the homeland: Against the political economy of village relocation

> *We are not ignorant of climate change nor do we choose to ignore the deterioration of the mountains, but can we move? How do we move? The government has never discussed this with us.*

A long time ago, Haocha was far removed from the plains and to travel from the village to the base of the mountain took several hours on foot. Not only was medical care difficult to procure, but finding a job was not easy. Soon, the nearby Paiwan villages of Fawan, Dalai, Maer and others were relocated to more convenient locations. A road to Ali, Jilu, Shenshan, and the other Rukai tribes in the mountains had been opened and, because they

were already connected to the electricity grid, the people enjoyed modern conveniences. Haocha's residents had begun to feel left behind, and feared that they would be excluded from future development projects. In 1977, they eventually agreed to relocate to the new location closer to the plains, as per the government's arrangement. Despite the fact that the village relocation was voluntary, Haocha's villagers faced even more serious social and cultural changes and challenges after relocating. Most significantly, the government did not fulfil its original commitment to provide land closer to the plains that was equivalent in quality to the area of Old Haocha. The majority of those who practiced farming to sustain themselves and their families had to convert to a new economic model as wage labour, and many villagers were forced into the cities to seek jobs.

At Old Haocha, I could rely on hunting and farming to make a living, the use of money hardly necessary, but after moving down the mountain, I found that without money it is difficult to survive: utilities, oil for the car, house repairs, the children's education and many other expenses, all required money. Money problems often give me a headache and keep me from sleeping well at night!' (Interview with Basakalane, August 2010).

The aforementioned painful experiences of tribal migration again became of the utmost significance for the villagers post-Morakot, and they were faced with the decision of where to relocate their villages. According to Article II of the Typhoon Morakot Post-disaster Delineation of Special Zones in Indigenous Areas Five Principles of Relocation, areas that have been identified as hazardous zones, if local residents they are willing to evacuate after consultation, the government will provide permanent housing and assistance with changing professions/finding work. If after discussion, residents still refuse to leave, they must be informed that it is a hazardous area on which may neither inhabit nor make use of the land'. In addition, as per the other provisions of Article III: 'Residents allocated permanent housing may not return to their place of origin to reside in or construct housing'. The above provisions requiring disaster victims to give up their homeland in the mountains caused more anxiety and were even more significant for a location such as Wutai Township, which had a significant number of its villages relocated after Morakot.

Of Wutai Township's six villages, only approximately 300 people of Wutai Village were not evacuated. Wutai Township is a Rukai stronghold and is the only Rukai township in Taiwan. Evacuating the villages and forcing relocation has serious consequences for Rukai cultural preservation and continuation; it is an issue that must be considered at length and not rushed. Two-thirds of the people in Wutai have been relocated to the plains, and if these villagers have been forced to relocate from the mountains, will the remainder living in Wutai also be forced to relocate? Is relocation of the entire township feasible? (Central News Agency, 2009)

Such misgivings led to resistance to the relocation policy among residents. For instance, on August 29, 2009, the Haocha overwhelmingly refused to have the Tzu Chi Foundation arrange to move them to Changzhi Broadcasting Station, and on November 25, the eighth meeting of the reconstruction committee, hundreds of disaster victims and community groups gathered at the Executive Yuan to voice their opposition to the delineation of special zones. On December 9–11, the government gathered a small group

to travel to Wutai Township (Jiamu, Ali, Jilu, and Haocha), Sandimen Township, and Laiyi Township. In the course of their journey, they met residents and social movement groups who blocked their way. The reasons for their opposition included concerns about the loss of culture and social disintegration caused by relocation, as well as profound feelings for their former villages, worry about the delineation of special zones restricting their rights, etc. In fact, there are still some indigenous residents who have persisted in staying in their homes in the mountains of Wutai, and continue to stand against the government.[5]

However, is adhering to one's homeland sustainable for the village's development? Or is leaving one's old home and migrating elsewhere inevitably the equivalent to the death of a village? In the aftermath of disaster, this is the continuing debate among tribesmen and among those concerned about indigenous social and cultural development. Those who advocate the position that migration will lead to social disintegration and disappearance of culture hold up the results of relocations during the Japanese occupation as evidence and demand that indigenous peoples not be removed from their places of origin. The government must adhere to the 'moving within the village if possible, moving within the township if possible' principle before moving the entire village or else it may result in greater tragedy. Those of the opposite position argue that relocation cases have traditionally been successful since areas of activity are expanded and moving down the mountain can ease population decline; they even point to the many tribal migrations preserved in oral history, which indicate that migration is not just something that is occurring only now. Indigenous ancestors were constantly searching for new places to live, due to shortage of arable land, to avoid epidemics or enemy invasion, and other factors. Therefore, they believe there is no reason to fear migration and consider natural disasters the enemy, or the cause of the unnecessary sacrifice of lives. The former position holds that ethnicity and culture are intrinsic or objective, considering indigenous peoples as unable and unwilling to leave their land. Chiang Bien's *Disaster, Culture and Subjectivity: Post-Typhoon Morakot Reflections* calls this into question:

> In the fields of the mountains are the traditional livelihoods of indigenous groups, there have been thousands of years of continuous movement. In some tribal oral histories, migration is not even limited to the mountains, and also clearly includes geographical names of places in the plains. The current location of the disaster-stricken villages may often be traced as not being the true ancestral location. In fact, for a long time now, living in today's tribal villages, it is often in the weekly, daily rituals of life and through a variety of practices, such as prayer, root-seeking activities, and in one's ancestral home that one is able to maintain deep spiritual ties. In this way, disaster-stricken tribesmen who speak of "returning home", by home do they mean the damaged village? Is it possible to return to an even earlier, ancestral home? (Chiang 2010: 25–26)

[5] For example, in Ali Village, thus far there are four people who insist on remaining in the mountains, unwilling to accept the government's provision of permanent housing, and even commissioned a legal aid organisation to assist in revoking the special zone delineation.

Jiang Bin, an anthropologist who works at the Institute of Ethnology Academia Sinica, mentions that village relocation should be an autonomous decision launched by forces from within a tribe or community. As long as the group is living in a common geographical area with shared linguistic characteristics, religious ceremonies, and cultural activities, the sustainable management of the village's own economic conditions should be possible and the integrity of the community may still be maintained. However, if the migration is initiated by external forces, especially capitalism and the state, the tribe may rush to move out of their place of origin and scatter, resulting not only in the village economy becoming difficult to maintain, but possibly even in the extinction of culture and language. Even when there is no disaster and just relocation, the tension of modernisation and the conquering force of capitalism can destroy the fragile economy of the village, lead to a decreasing number of young people staying in the village and a large part of economic livelihood reliant on metropolitan areas or nearby towns in the plains. Therefore, whether disaster brings about "forced village relocation" or economic recession causes "natural migration", the end result may very well be the same with the difference being only the speed at which the village disappears. Jiang Bin is critical of the disregard or overlooking of culture fading away by those who protest against village relocation. In Jiang Bin's opinion, culture is constantly changing and adapting, but to simply attribute everything to that may be too optimistic and ignores the painful memories of the indigenous migration experience. In actuality, indigenous post-disaster anxiety and panic should not be about *relocation*, but rather, *dispersal*. Fear of dispersal, in fact, is a precise argument for fair and complete access and distribution to permanent housing.

## Traditional concepts of space

In addition to distinguishing their own tribe from others according to altitude, the Rukai also use the notion of geographical altitude to distinguish between good and bad living environments. The Haocha people's concept of space includes the belief that Rukai areas of 1,500 m and above are best. Not only is the air cleaner and temperatures cooler at such altitudes, a larger variety of animals also lives at such elevations. Meanwhile, farm crops such as sweet potatoes and taro are not only larger, but also sweeter. At altitudes lower than 500 meters, which the Rukai call *labelabe*, there are only small animals such as flying squirrels, voles, and pangolins. Hunting for these animals does not have any social significance, i.e. hunting them successfully will not make a hunter eligible to wear the lilies traditionally bestowed for hunting prowess. In addition, the environment in labelabe zones is hot and humid, making it easy for people to become sick and rendering the labelabe unsuitable for human habitation. In addition, the Haochas also believe that the labelabe regions comprise the place where the souls of those who have died in the wild gather. They are seen as unclean areas where evil spirits are active. This dual Haocha concept of high and low representing good and evil differs greatly from the contemporary colonial and modern point of view. This difference in spatial concepts was made especially clear in the 1980s, when debate erupted during the relocation of Haocha village.

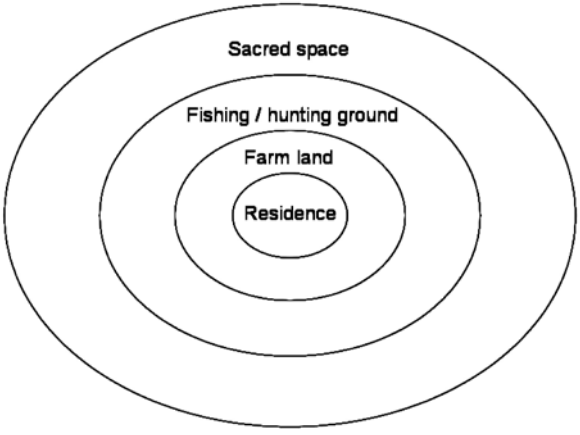


*Figure 1: Traditional Haocha spatial mapping*

Deep in the hearts of the Haocha people, there is a spatial map that guides their daily routine. This spatial map represents their global and universal view, as well as serving as the spiritual map that manages the earth and its natural resources. The spatial map of the Haocha uses the residence (*lialiolo*) as the centre, and then spreads out to the surrounding areas. The surrounding areas, in order of distance from the centre, are farmlands (*dakawaungane*), hunting grounds (*dalubane*), fisheries (*dakerale*), and sacred space (*daulisishane*) (Figure 1).

The residential area can be regarded as a social space. The farmlands, hunting grounds, and fisheries constitute production space, and the sacred space is the space for spiritual life. These spaces are distributed in different areas and have different names and legends. Traditionally, social space and production space are allocated by the chieftain, who enjoys special privileges, but sacred space is beyond human control and belongs to religious and spiritual levels. This space, accordingly, cannot be allocated by humans.

The word *rukai*, is derived from the term *yakaikitakagecerane*, which means *people that live in cold zones*. Traditionally, the Rukai divided living space into rukai, *paralibicane*, and *labelabe* according to altitude, temperature, and the distribution of animals. The term rukai is synonymous with *takagecerane*, which refers to relatively *dry and cold regions*; *paralibicane* means *hot and cold zone boundary*; and labelabe refers to *hot and humid areas*, which the Rukai also call *takatulwane*. According to the Rukai people's geographical perspective, altitudes above 1,500 m are *rukai*, altitudes between 500 and 1,500 m are *paralibicane*, and areas below 500 m are *labelabe* (Figure 2).

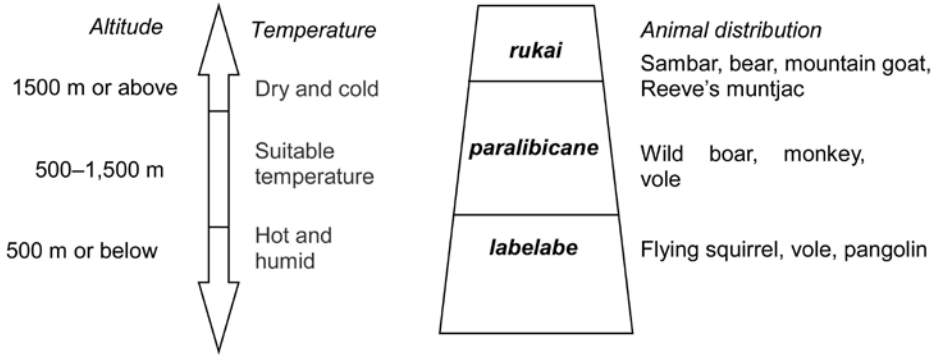


*Figure 2: Rukai tribal space classifications*

In the past, the Rukai saw their own tribe's location as the geographical centre by which to define other ethnic groups from lower terrain. From this tribal perspective, the name Rukai signifies that they are living in a 'higher and colder place' (Auvinni Kadresengane 1996: 15). For example, when speaking to members of the Paiwan tribe, the Rukai refer to themselves as *ngudradrekai*, which means *mountain people* or *people who live in the mountains*, indicating that they live in a dry and cold area (or takagecerane).

## Relocation and adjustment

Prior to Typhoon Morakot, Majia Farm was originally only meant to be a relocation site for Haocha. In order to avoid repeating the mistakes made and issues faced 30 years ago when relocating to New Haocha, such as improper settlement planning, insufficient arable land, and the disappearance of cultural rituals and space, the planning unit specifically plotted to include a "Sustainable Settlement Development Area" for each development area, including residential areas, land for future expansion, public facilities, roads and agricultural land. However, in the aftermath of the typhoon, the original design for the space was discarded and redrawn to provide more households with accommodation and to fit the relocation requirements of three villages rather than just one. The concept of an economic space regarding agricultural was abandoned as was the social space for rituals because the police station, village office and churches occupied the remaining space, thus, forcing many cultural and heritage facilities to be compressed

Compared to Dashe and Majia, both of which still have their houses and land semi-intact, the people of Haocha have virtually no place left to go. Although the Old Haocha traditional territory remains, a trip back and forth from Rinari requires one or two days. Farming, hunting and gathering have been made far more unlikely, and economic life is facing formidable challenges. A villager said: 'If this land doesn't even belong to us, can this be considered a relocation? This plan only resolves the housing issue, not the relocation. The basic functions of life have simply not been considered.'

Another villager after the completion of the permanent houses noted:

> This is no permanent housing, we have been relocated! This is not where I grew up, with its incomplete traditional areas… this place seems more like a nest to sleep in, not a home … let me go back to the mountains, I cannot use money here at the base of the mountains for the rest of my life!

In accordance with the provisions of Article 20 of the Special Act, within hazardous zones, (places identified by experts and scholars and the Council of Agriculture as unsafe), all use must be surrendered. According to Public Works Committee, vice chairman Chern Jenn-chuan at a Reconstruction Council meeting on October 14, 2009:

> Land that was originally building land, will become "non-building land", if it was agricultural land, it may become "farming use limited" land, even roads, that is, if the original road was 30 m, if there was regular maintenance and standards … they will now likely become "partially maintained" or "not maintained", that is, even if land still belongs to its landowners, there will be very strict restrictions on use and roads may no longer be preserved. In regards to farmed land, if activity is limited then the ginger, vegetables, fruit trees, quite possibly might not grow any longer; [methods] will be more stringent than previous laws.

At present, in Rinari one can still see a few households that have planted pigeon peas, millet, red quinoa, and other traditional crops, and after being harvested, set out to dry in the sun in the front courtyard. These are all indigenous species that the villagers collectively worked to bring to Rinari. Although the living environment has changed greatly, traditional work habits continue, especially among the elderly. Seeing millet that has been painstakingly grown in harsh mountain condition invokes a feeling of deep satisfaction in many villages. An old woman said:

> When Morakot attacked, our entire millet harvest was destroyed! At the time we were broken-hearted, because it is very difficult to take proper care of millet, not just in avoiding storms, but also in resisting the birds. One must drive birds away for at least two months, and get up earlier than the birds every day, waiting for the millet to 'get off work' before being able to go home. My husband and I have spent nearly all our lives caring for millet. Once it grows up and can be harvested, we can breathe a sigh of relief.

Although these traditional crops are more cultural rather than economic crops, with no "output value", they are still a part of indigenous livelihood, and the elderly or the economically deprived often rely on these crops. If the relocation does not support measures resolving the lack of arable land, many are left with no choice but to head to the plains to find work. Generations of people have been dependent on the mountain environment and the gradual development of agriculture. With traditional rituals and ceremonies, the order and organisation of labour (labour exchange) is highly structured. Once a cultural space or land is lost, the ability of a community to maintain such practices may be compromised.

A tribesman stated:

> When a nation has lost its traditional areas and sacred space, it could mean the loss of the link with ancestral spirits; losing a tribal hunting ground and land is like losing an autonomous economic and cultural space. Moving to Majia Farm, many people envy the 'beautiful' houses, and it is very close to areas for work. However, they do not see the price we pay ... We have to give up thousands of hectares of hunting grounds, rich with boar, deer and goats, countless and ever use of forests and natural resources, in exchange for only 30 hectares of residence and 32 square feet per house. The village has been squeezed into this living space, and we are like an imprisoned population (Interview with Lawucu, January 2012).

## Conclusion: Re-examining relocation

American anthropologist William Torry believes that although disasters cause damage to indigenous societies, their social structure will automatically balance. The self-balancing theory emphasises the long-term stability of indigenous societies and cultures in the vagaries of environmental conditions. In the dynamic equilibrium of society, various parts continue to function and fluctuate and then return to a steady state. Through recovery, culture plays an pivotal role in the cultural and social cohesion of the social system functions being restored in the aftermath of a disaster (Torry 1979a, 1979b).

When examining a century of village relocation in Taiwan's history, the government has always carried out its relocation policies with the people as a separate consideration, which is an critical factor in the loss of indigenous culture and social disintegration. At home and abroad, many examples show that relocation impacts a wide range of issues at all levels, not simply involving just the material aspect. During implementation, if the government or implementing party does not pay particular attention to the many non-material factors, such as social, cultural and psychological factors during the relocation process, then the results of relocation are often only half as effective, or may even cause irreparable harm to the community (Cernea 2009; Feng Dai-yu 2005; Chen & Fan 2002).

Hewitt believes that people who consider disasters, such as earthquakes, hurricanes and floods, to be entirely 'natural' disasters are totally misled. His research points out that the lower the societal class and poverty of a population, the more likely it is to become victim to a natural disaster. As a result of power imbalance and uneven distribution of social resources, the more the ethnic group lacks the underlying mechanisms to respond to disasters. Opportunity, superstition, the use of science and technology practices to address the management of natural disasters, such as construction to guard against or provide the victims temporary shelter and other measures, are palliative practices, but also detract from further understanding and the resolve to fix the underlying social problems (Hewitt 1983). Few people understand the form and results of the disaster management in terms of the local social structure and its relationship with national and international order in advance constraints. Local vulnerabilities must be taken into account as well as the capacity to

be invested in disaster operations and relief and reconstruction need to be adapted to local conditions or else it disaster relief can result in a truly devastating impact on the affected population. As a result, local people and groups have to spend energy to affect the operation of foreign institutions, or ultimately choose a path not officially recognised by the redevelopment project. Lack of understanding of local conditions inevitably results in disaster for a variety of institutions, and can affect the contact between countries, the local government, NGOs and other institutions (Oliver-Smith & Hoffman 2002).

Because populations reside in different ecological and social environments, they also adapt differently to natural disasters and ecological strain. Therefore, in disaster research, if one does not start from the within the study population to understand the practical implications of the disaster in a different cultural context while also being unable to separate oneself from subjective social and cultural contexts, disaster research can deviate from the facts and will not help understand the root causes of the disaster.

As for the long-standing interdependent relationship between indigenous people and the land, it includes a community's life experiences, material culture and collective memory. Once they are removed from their ancestral living space and traditional territory, livelihoods as well as interpersonal relationships are difficult to maintain. History has shown that relocation not only affects space, productivity and social structure, it also has effects on cultural preservation. Political compromise shaped the Rinari just as the geography of the administrative enclave includes both cultural heterogeneity and the ability of the community to live together in conflict as recorded in history. Miscellaneous points may result in future ethnic cooperation as well as continued conflict. Rinari's crowded living space and an obvious shortage of arable land are sufficient to cause new problems and difficulties in industrial development. The future, if one considers the difference and particularity of the individual ethnic groups in language, culture and lifestyle, and uses generalised modes of thinking to simplify complex ethnic issues, most likely holds another disaster. In post-disaster reconstruction, housing and the construction of public facilities is not the only issue that must be taken into consideration by policy makers. The reconstruction process must also factor in the considerations of health, culture, and society.

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## Povzetek

Dolgotrajni soodvisni odnos med staroselci in njihovo zemljo vključuje življenjske izkušnje skupnosti, materialno kulturo in kolektivni spomin. Ko jih preselijo z življenjskega prostora njihovih prednikov in tradicionalnega ozemlja, postanejo življenja kot tudi medosebni odnosi težavni. Zgodovina je pokazala, da preselitev ne vpliva le na prostor, produktivnost in družbeno strukturo temveč tudi na ohranjanje kulture. Po tajfunu Morakot je tajvanska vlada preselila tri staroselske vasi Dashe, Majia in Haocha na površino, veliko približno 30 hektarov. Področje, ki se danes imenuje Rinari je z okoli 1500 prebivalci eno največjih staroselskih področij na Tajvanu. Študija primera v vasi Haocha (Kucapungane) s področja Rinari proučuje konflikte in socialno ranljivost, ki jih s seboj prinese preselitev. V primeru Kucapungane se preselitev ni zgodila prvič velik del politik preselitve pa je zgrajen na enaki osnovi kot v preteklih preselitvah: vlada še vedno verjame, da je dovolj, če staroselcem, ki so žrtve naravnih nesreč, zagotovi varen kraj za bivanje. Pričujoča raziskava predlaga, da je potrebno ponovno preučiti preselitvene metode, pri čemer je potrebno upoštevati zemljo, kulturo, vzgojo in izobraževanje ter ekonomske vidike preživetja v novo ustanovljenih področjih. Politike, ki bi temeljile na podrobnih študijah, bi lahko s svojimi praksami zmanjšale negativne vplive preselitve in poselitve na preživetje staroselske kulture in bi lahko služile kot osnova kulturnega razvoja.

KLJUČNE BESEDE: naravna katastrofa, staroselci, rekonstrukcija, ranljivost, Morakot

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