Journal of Archaeology and Anthropology・70:47-78・2009

Place and Environmental Movement in Houjin, Kaohsiung*

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ABSTRACT

This paper documents the origins, processes, and outcomes of Houjin's long-lasting environmental campaign against the CPC. The field site, Houjin, is a working-class neighborhood located in the northernmost district of Kaohsiung City. Houjin community was mobilized for a three-year protest in 1987-1990, and then in 2004, against the neighboring Kaohsiung Refinery of the Chinese Petroleum Corporation (CPC)－Taiwan's chief oil company and the main source of pollution in the area. I suggest that place provides a vantage point from which to better understand the motive and resilience of Houjin's two decade long environmental campaign. This basic argument has two connotations: first, place-based identity as Houjin-ren (people of Houjin), constituted in the shared pollution experience, kinship and neighborly networks, and communal religious rituals, was the basis for mobilizing across factional and partisan lines within the community. Second, other than merely a counteract to the polluting Refinery, the movement was indeed a communal struggle over defining the meaning, identity, and future of the place Houjin. The environmental movement set in motion a cultural politics through which the position and identity of Houjin was being reconceptualized as activists fight for recognition of their rights to the environment. In this sense, the Houjin movement is parallel to other community-based social movements occurring in

* Research was partially funded by the 2004 Faculty Senate Research Grant from the University of Southern Maine. A previous version of this article was presented at the 2006 North American Taiwan Studies Conference at the University of California-Santa Cruz. I thank Stevan Harrell for his encouragement, as well as David Griffith for his editorial comments. Three anonymous reviewers of *The Journal of Archaeology and Anthropology* provided invaluable critiques which helped greatly in refining the main argument of this article.

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the world, in which place plays a pivotal role in the production of environmental awareness.

Keywords: social movements, environmental movement, community, place, Kaohsiung

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地方意識與環境運動：高雄後勁的個案研究

呂欣怡*

摘　要

本文以事件—過程分析來探討高雄後勁地區為期廿年的社區環境運動。後勁位於高雄市北部，是一個帶有傳統村落特徵的都會邊緣社區。自 1987 年開始，後勁居民長期與鄰近的中油高雄煉油廠抗爭，這段環境運動歷史依即時目標不同可分為兩個動員階段：第一階段是 1987-1990 年，以反對第五輕油裂解廠設立為訴求而開啟了長達三年，在台灣環保運動史上寫下重要一頁的「後勁反五輕運動」；較不具全國知名度的第二階段發生於 2003-2008 年間，主要訴求是督促政府遵守 1990 年訂下的「廿五年遷廠協定」，讓高雄煉油廠如期搬遷而非就地轉型。根據筆者在 1990 年及 2004 年所收集的訪談資料及觀察記錄，本文建議「地方」—做為認同象徵—是維繫後勁長期對抗高廠的主要因素。這一基本論點有兩層意涵：第一，建立於共同污染體驗、親屬朋友網絡、及公廟信仰的地方身份—「咱後勁人」—是兩階段動員的主要基礎。第二，後勁藉由環境運動所展現的，不僅僅是消極地排拒一個重污染的煉油廠，更重要的，以地方為基底的環境運動提供了一個意義鬥爭場域，在廿年間轉變了「後勁」在高雄市的象徵位階，更讓後勁居民在發展思維之外，醞釀出一種地方自主的另類想像。從這個層面而言，後勁環境運動呼應了當代全球社會運動的共同趨勢，在其中「地方」起著關鍵作用，既是集體行動的動員基礎，也提供了模塑運動訴求及行動策略的文化資源。

關鍵字：社會運動、草根環境運動、社區組織、地方、高雄後勁

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> *After a long day of interviewing, I was exhausted from the heat and ready to retreat in Liu's living room. As soon as I walked in, I smelled gas. Initially I thought the kitchen stove was leaking, so I ran in and checked the switches of the burners as well as the valve of the propane tank in the kitchen; nothing was loosened or broken, however. I walked back to the living room, the smell permeated the air, and I started to feel slight nausea. At that time, someone was honking vigorously outside. I opened the door and saw Zheng shouting from his scooter: "Did you smell it? Zhong-you (The Chinese Petroleum Corporation, hereafter CPC) is emitting toxics again! I came to alert you so you can write down this experience and bring it back to America!" I rushed out, neighbors were already gathering in the street, complaining about their physical discomfort…Bao, a farmer in his sixties, lamented, "Living in Houjin, we have been struggling with this kind of nuisance [caused by the CPC] all our life. Is it tiring!"* (field notes, June 25, 2004).

In summer 2004, I returned to my first fieldsite Houjin in northern Kaohsiung City. The trip was initially prompted by personal nostalgia rather than research purpose. Seventeen years ago in 1987, residents of Houjin began to mobilize in opposition to the construction project of the Fifth Naphtha Cracker (hereafter FNC) in the CPC Kaohsiung Refinery—the chief refinery of the then most profitable state enterprise. Their campaign lasted three years and has been praised ever since as the exemplar of Taiwan's grassroots environmental movements (Weller 2006:105). The 1980s, as numerous scholars and commentators proclaimed, was Taiwan's "golden age" of social movements.[1] Various social forces rose up for the first time and merged into a powerful torrent that shattered the authoritarian control of the party-state (Hsiao 1990; Li and Lin 2003). During the protest years between 1987 and 1990, Houjin was akin to a pilgrimage destination for college students like me who were aspiring in social activism. Although the community seemed dormant throughout the entire 1990s, I have longed for revisiting Houjin while overseas not only because it was the site of my anthropological initiation, but also it symbolized some of the most promising times of the island. Little did I know that on this nostalgic trip in 2004 I

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would witness a series of environmental events which would lead to the eventual triumph of the community's long struggle against the CPC.

There have been two stages of popular mobilization in Houjin's environmental campaign since 1987. The first phase, known as *Houjin fan wuqing yundong* (Houjin Anti-FNC Movement), has been well documented as it was the first organized protest against a state enterprise in martial-law Taiwan.[2] Triggered by reasons similar to what Kalland and Persoon (1998) identified in most 1980s Asian environmental movements, the Houjin anti-FNC movement was initially a response to "concrete problems in people's immediate neighborhoods" (p.2), in this case the concerns over possible increase of pollution from the proposed FNC. Yet, its longevity surpassed that of other contemporaneous anti-pollution protests which often ended abruptly with monetary compensation. Even though the Houjin movement failed to repeal the FNC construction, it effectively called public attention to the severe environmental degradation surrounding Taiwan's petrochemical center. As a give-and-take condition for withdrawal of protesters, the government promised in 1990 that the Refinery would be removed by 2015, after another 25 years of operation.

The second phase of Houjin's environmental campaign began in 2004, prompted by the CPC's alleged attempts to revoke the 25-year relocation plan. This period of mobilization included a series of public hearings, town meetings, lobbying and petitions, and rallies, all aiming at demonstrating the community's collective will to see the relocation plan through. Less combative than the actions taken a decade ago, Houjin's 2004 environmental campaign—in its active effort to engage legislature, electoral politics, and environmental technocrats and scholars—resembled what Tang and Tang (1997) characterized as the new form of environmental politics that emerged after Taiwan's democratic transition. The movement leaders drew upon the legacy of the 1980s campaign to justify their demands. Removing the Kaohsiung Refinery from the area, they contended, was but a long belated compensation from the state to the blue collar residents who had sacrificed their health and living environment for Taiwan's economic growth. More significantly, in line with the greening strategy of Kaohsiung's redevelopment (Lee 2007:128) the petrochemical

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industry was no longer considered the engine of economy; rather it was viewed an impeding force that blocked local development. After five years of collective effort, the Ministry of Economy formally announced on August 13, 2008, that the Kaohsiung Refinery would be relocated on schedule.

PLACE, MEANING, AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

This paper documents the origins, processes, and outcomes of Houjin's long-lasting environmental campaign against the CPC. I suggest that place, as "the space of integration" of "body, habitat, home and community" (Escobar et al. 2002:29), provides a vantage point from which to better understand the motive and resilience of Houjin's two decade long environmental campaign. This basic argument has two connotations: first, place-based identity as *Houjin-ren* (people of Houjin), constituted in the shared pollution experience, kinship and neighborly networks, and communal religious rituals, was the basis for mobilizing across partisan and factional lines within the community (Ho 2005; Weller and Hsiao 1998; also see Fing 2000).[3] The movement's leadership structure remained local despite enormous support and interest from nationwide environmental organizations,[4] with the Houjin Temple Committee being the main source of funding and direction. Second, more than merely a counteract to the polluting Refinery, the movement was indeed a communal struggle over defining the meaning, identity, and future of the place Houjin. The environmental movement instigated a cultural politics through which the position of Houjin in the Kaohsiung municipality was being reconceptualized as activists fought for public recognition of their rights to the environment. In this sense, the Houjin movement is in alignment with other community-based social movements occurring in the world, in which place plays a pivotal role in the production of environmental awareness (Escobar et al. 2002).

Scholarly interests in social movements began to grow in the late 1970s, first focused on Europe and North America, and soon spread to the newly democratized countries in Latin America and Asia. Anthropologists, however, remained largely absent in this fertile theoretical ground until the mid-1990s. In a critical review on the

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"invisibility of social movements in anthropology," Escobar (1992:396-397) pointed out that the discipline has long favored "synchronic, static and objectivist modes of inquiry" towards culture and society. Several excellent anthologies that came out in the 1990s, at last, broadened anthropology's involvement in social movement studies (e.g. Alvarez et al. 1998; Escobar and Alvarez 1992; Starn and Fox 1997). Influenced by the New Social Movements theorists (e.g. Laclau and Mouffe, Melucci, Touraine), two interrelated approaches ─ cultural politics perspective and agency oriented perspective—have been most common in the anthropology of social movements. Contesting the static understanding of culture, advocates of cultural politics approach reconceptualize culture as "a collective and incessant process of producing meanings that shapes social experience and configures social relations" (Alvarez et al. 1998:3). Social movements in this perspective are theorized as organized battles over ideas, symbols, meaning, and identities. Then, with a focus on the change-makers, the social actors that carry out the cultural production process via their collective action, agency oriented ethnographies investigate "how activists strategize to create and deploy political identities, achieve goals, and develop persuasive ideologies and visions of a just future" (Brodkin 2005:304).

Compared with our sociological counterparts, anthropology's distinctive contribution to studies of social movements lies in its ethnographic methodology which gives localized descriptions and grounded analyses on grassroots politics often too "messy" for generalization (Edelman 2001:286). Based on the long-held disciplinary tradition of highlighting particularity against universality (Choy 2005:6), moreover, a major portion of research in this thread concerns the spatial dynamics of power and resistance in the global process; the local place is privileged as "the site of resistance to capital [and] the location for imagining alternative possibilities for the future" (Wilson and Dissanayake 1996:22). As Dirlik (1996:23) points out, "advocacy of place" is an objective shared by a wide spectrum of contemporary social movements to counteract the threats of monotonous globalization. In the present era of delocalization, place remains an important source of culture and identity, even if both of which are constructed in social practices (Escobar 2008:7).

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Following the paradigm of the anthropology of social movements, this research pays close attention to the activists, looking into how they articulated a place-based environmental action and thought through the prolonged struggle against the Kaohsiung Refinery. Information was drawn from two phases of fieldwork that are 13 years apart: In the first phase of field research, I lived with the family of one of the movement leaders from November 1990 through January 1991 as a graduate student; 13 years later, I came back to Houjin during the summer break from my teaching position at an American liberal arts college and stayed with the same family from June through August 2004. In both phases, my main methods of data collection were participant observation and semi-structured interviews. I participated in the strategic planning meetings, communal events, and public demonstrations that had occurred during my stay, and interviewed the movement leaders and active participants. Due to the contrasting political atmospheres between the two phases, interview data were handled differently. I did not tape record any of the interviews in the first phase, for the fear of causing discomfort in my informants who still had vivid memories of the political terror from the martial law period. Therefore the quotes and paraphrases were from my notes jotted down as soon as the interview was over. 13 years later in 2004, and 17 years after the abolishment of the martial law, tape-recording was no longer a taboo, and thus I was able to fully record the nine interviews, semistructured and open-ended, with movement leaders and local administrators at their homes or offices. With permission, I recorded in full length two community meetings, one street march, and several public speeches pertinent to the environmental movement. In addition to interviewing key informants and participating in meetings, I randomly talked to people in the streets or in the gatherings to get a general sense of what the movement meant to ordinary residents.

GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

In the current municipal administrative system, Houjin refers to the five precincts northwest of the Kaohsiung Refinery in Nanzi District—the northernmost district of Kaohsiung City. Most of the factories and plants are concentrated on the

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city's outskirts, and residents of those districts generally live in close proximity to some industrial units with little to no green zones in between. Houjin's environmental condition exemplifies such lack of industrial safety planning: three sides of this pentagon-shape neighborhood border with the Refinery, and the fourth side faces the gated community exclusively built for the employees of the CPC. Many residents complain that Houjin is "choked" by the wings of the refinery, whose smokestacks and oil tanks are omnipresent whichever the direction you look from within the Houjin neighborhood.

By 1980, there were more than a thousand of factories and chemical plants operating within a three mile radius from Houjin, many of which relied on the supply of petroleum and petrochemicals from the Kaohsiung Refinery. Founded in 1946 on the 384-hecter site previously used for fuel tanks by the Japanese navy, the Kaohsiung Refinery now refines crude oil into various petroleum products and petrochemical raw materials. Its products include fuel gas, diesels, LPG, and asphalt, and it has a capacity of 270,000 barrels of crude oil per day (Kaohsiung Refinery, 2008). It is the oldest and biggest refinery of the CPC. Due to its age and size, and its proximity to residential areas, the Kaohsiung Refinery has been charged by the city's Bureau of Environmental Protection as the biggest polluter out of Kaohsiung's numerous industrial units.

To illustrate how the existence of the Kaohsiung Refinery plagues the sense of place of Houjin, imagine yourself a visitor from downtown Kaohsiung.[5] If you take the metro bus, you must first pass by the Kaohsiung Refinery. You will see its West Entrance, the bubble wires, and the blue-painted banner—"Industrial Safety First; Environmental Protection Most Valued." You then turn around the corner and proceed on Hou-Chang Road, sided with the walls of the refinery. After about a mile you reach the busy intersection of Hou-Jin East Road and Hou-Chang Road and finally see Feng-Ping Gong—the communal temple of Houjin. Or, if you come from Taipei, you will most likely take the freeway, get off the Nanzi Exit, and pass by the rear side of the Refinery. If you arrive after dark, you might be struck by the orange sky, colored by the flames erupted from the dozens of smokestacks inside the Refinery.

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If you had come before the early 1990s, you would have also noticed the odorous air, saturated with the stinks of burning oil and other unknown chemicals, once you rolled down the car windows. The locals used to joke that visitors did not need the direction or a map to find Houjin—"just follow the smell," they said. Over the years they have developed a distinctive local knowledge about the sources and contents of pollution based on the various odors.

As an outsider, you might wonder why anyone would choose to live in such close proximity to this monstrous industrial complex. Yet, the locals would be eager to correct you that it was them who got here first. When asked to characterize their community, Houjin residents often describe it as a *gu-bok-lok* (old tribe or old village), a vernacular term in southern Taiwan which refers to the neighborhoods that had been settled before the modern municipality was established. Houjin is one of the earliest Han settlements in what is currently northern Kaohsiung; the name dates back to a troop (it literally means "the rear force") who followed the Ming loyalist Zheng Cheng-gong to Taiwan in 1661, even though none of the families presently in the neighborhood can clearly trace their ancestry to Zheng's soldiers. The earliest settlers with written records started their families here around 1700, and by the late 1800s Houjin had become one of the most prosperous market places in the Kaohsiung region. Kinship ties are still strong in Houjin, and several lineages—Cai, Liu, Chen, Huang, and Lin—still keep their ancestral halls and annual worship ceremonies. Old residents address their neighbors and friends in kinship terms, and most of the movement leaders have known one another nearly all their lives. Like other gu-bok-lok, streets are narrow here, lined with three or five-story concrete town houses. The two communal temples, Sheng Yun Gong and Feng Ping Gong, are considered the spiritual and political center of the community, supported by mandatory annual contribution from each household within the neighborhood. The temple courtyards and the market place next to Feng Ping Gong provide the primary public spaces for the community; and community events are frequently announced via the temple's broadcasting system, which has loudspeakers installed at every street corner.

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FIRST PERIOD OF POPULAR MOBILIZATION: 1987-1990[6]

In summer 1987, news began to float around in Houjin that the CPC was planning to add a new plant—the Fifth Naphtha Cracker (FNC)—to the already expansive Kaohsiung refinery. Alarmed by the news, Houjin residents feared that this new addition would bring in more toxic emission to the already pollutant-saturated environment. Although lacking technological knowledge about the function of a naphtha cracker, the term reminded them of the notorious Second Naphtha Cracker, also sited in the Kaohsiung Refinery, which had produced the most noise and safety concerns among the plants within the Refinery. A year before on June 4, 1986, the cooling system of the Second Naphtha Cracker breached; oil leaked in and mixed with the steam, which then erupted and blew west towards Houjin. Within a couple of minutes the whole neighborhood was showered with black raindrops. This infamous "black rain incident" was recited again and again by the protesters in their struggles against the FNC. Even though the CPC's intention of building the FNC was to replace the aged, dysfunctional plant, Houjin residents claimed that they had had enough insults and would not let the CPC add another polluting capacity in the Refinery.

On July 2, 1987, Huang, a school teacher and political aspirant, and a couple of young men then in their thirties, decided to take actions. They drove around every street in the neighborhood, broadcasting the news of the FNC project and asking the residents to march to the main entrance of the Refinery to protest. Liu, a key participant, recalled,

> *At that time while we were marching, we heard a lot of mocking comments. Some elderly ladies said, 'Who do you think you are? It is the* government's *CPC that you are facing. Such a humongous enterprise—you think you can even tickle it just by a couple of young fellows like you?' That really hurt* (conversation with author, November 1990).

Amid such defeatism, only 20 some people joined the first demonstration; however, this seemingly inconsequential event triggered a series of mass protests in

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the next few months. On July 24, 1987, Li Dahai, Minister of Economy, came from Taipei to inspect the Kaohsiung Refinery. Hundreds of Houjin residents gathered outside the main entrance of the Refinery, demanding to talk to Li about the FNC. They never got to see the Minister that day. Infuriated by what they perceived as contemptuousness coming from the Refinery and the government, the residents set up a tent, blocked the west gate of the Refinery, camped there for the night, and started the three-year long protest movement against the FNC project. In the following months of 1987, the west-gate blockade would remain a media focus, and the name Houjin came to symbolize the battle between "the people" and "the (KMT) government" in the midst of Taiwan's non-violent, yet impassioned, political transition from authoritarianism to democracy.

That the 1980s environmental protests were integral to the political and social democratization of post-martial law Taiwan has been widely noted (e.g. Ho 2006). Being the first case in postwar period wherein a local community voiced their opposition to a state-owned enterprise, Houjin's protest was often said to have marked a critical stage of Taiwan's democratic transition. For example, *Taiwan Communique*, a bimonthly published by overseas Taiwanese community, had a full length report about Houjin's protest movement to show the increasing grassroots frustration against the KMT governance and the brutality of the police-state:

> *On October 20, 1987, more than 400 residents from Hou-ching, mostly illiterate elderly farmers, arrived in Taipei in ten tourist buses after five hours bus ride from Kaohsiung. They demonstrated in front of the Legislative Yuan to protest the construction of a fifth naphtha cracking plant by the state-owned Chinese Petroleum Corporation near their homes. The peaceful demonstration ended in clashes with the police after the police refused to release two elderly protesters who were taken into custody…*
>
> *The* Independence Evening Post *reported that the police was ruthless against the elderly protesters. A reporter witnessed ten policemen dragging an elderly woman, and she was slapped in the face. One man*

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> *who came to her rescue was injured after being beaten and kicked by the police. Police arrested a 51-year-old farmer and a 63-year-old elderly woman in the fracas.*
> *After the police reneged a promise to release the two protesters, the demonstrators, now assisted by DPP legislator Chu Kao-cheng, blocked all the gates of the legislative building. They hoped to bring the arrest to the attention of Premier Yu Kuo-hwa, and other high government officials, who were about to depart the legislature after a day of interpellations. Premier Yu left by a side door under police protection. The blockade was broken up around 7:15 p.m., when policemen aided by 16 members of the police "thunderbolt unit" charged into the crowd. The protesters, who were caught off-guard, scurried for cover. Meanwhile, a score of limousines, carrying high officials sped off…*
> *The two elderly protesters, who were arrested by the police at the scene of conflict, told reporters: "We strongly oppose the construction of the new plant," even when they were being led away by the police. Later they admonished their children during a prison visit, "Do not use our release as the condition to give up the fight"* (Taiwan Communique 1987:19-21).

I quoted this report in length because its narrative typified how environmental protests were framed by the news media and social activists in the late 1980s. Throughout the report a series of oppositions was underlined: Kaohsiung (south) vs. Taipei (north); illiterate farmers vs. high officials; powerless protesters vs. brutal police; and people vs. the KMT government. This resembled the dichotomy of rural/urban, poor/rich, and the people/state commonly present in the narratives of what Ramachandra Guha theorized as the "environmentalism of the poor" in "less urbanized, less industrialized societies" (Guha 1997:19).

As both Guha (1997) and Checker (2002) demonstrate in their case studies, environmental hazards and socio-economic inequalities are often closely related issues. Houjin's popular movement was mobilizing on a language of class rift in

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addition to environmental concerns, mainly reflected in the quality of living between the Refinery housing area and Houjin neighborhood. Originated from the prewar Japanese navy officer housing and vastly expanded during the 1950s, the Refinery's housing area was once the most envied neighborhood of the entire Kaohsiung city for its abundant green space and orderly streets. It was deliberately built upwind of the Refinery so the smelly emissions did not blow towards the employee houses, contrary to the location of Houjin. Prior to 1990, the Refinery housing area was gated; its recreational facilities — including a cinema, a swimming pool, and several playgrounds—were exclusive to the Refinery workers. Young people in Houjin made frequent attempts to sneak into the Refinery, however, to watch movies or play sports. Once they got caught by the guards—and it was quite easy to distinguish Houjin youngsters from the CPC employees based on their Minnan accent and shabby clothes—they would be scorned and even punished. This humiliating experience was a common memory for those born before 1960, who comprised the steadfast core of the movement participants.

Recognizing that the resentment of Houjin towards the Refinery grew from diverse issues, rather than merely the pollution, the CPC began to modify its strategies of reconciliation with Houjin. Chen Baolang, then the director of Public Relations of the Refinery, told me that he had discerned at the very early stage that Houjin's animosity was mainly a "class issue" (jieji wenti); thus he proposed that the Refinery learn to be a good neighbor to Houjin before proceeding on the FNC project. To gather genuine voices from Houjin residents, Chen sent out representatives to do home visit and participate in community events. They identified the most needed areas of the community (field notes, November 1990). Starting from early 1988, the CPC invested in a series of community development projects under the umbrella program of "Good Neighborliness" in the Houjin neighborhood, including tap water installation,[7] road maintenance, and scholarship programs. The CPC also declared that it would offer quota in hiring to Houjin residents. Most important of all, the Refinery housing area gradually put its guard down and gave Houjin residents access to its recreational space. In two years, the CPC would spend over 77 million NT on

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the “Good Neighborliness Program” (Wang 1990)

As the Refinery lay low to carry on its neighborly work, the FNC project was suspended through the years of 1988 and 1989. When 1990 came, news began to flow around that the FNC construction would be resumed soon, as the CPC officers actively invited journalists and anti-pollution groups of Kaohsiung to tour the pollution abatement projects within the Kaohsiung Refinery. In May 1990, a referendum on the FNC project was conducted in Houjin; the question on the ballot was “should Houjin continue our opposition to the FNC, or should Houjin begin to negotiate with the CPC in assessing the environmental impact and monetary compensation of the FNC project?” Despite the CPC’s two years of effort to build a harmonious relationship with Houjin, over 70% Houjin residents selected the first option. This was a big defeat for the CPC because it showed that their Good Neighborliness Program had not produced the desirable effect. The referendum caused a delay of the FNC construction initially planned in June. The month after, Hao Bocun, an army general, was appointed to be the premier of The Executive Yuan. Known for his strong will, Hao vowed to bring order to the chaos caused by relentless street demonstrations and “self-help movements” by indicting the “environmental mobsters,” in his words those who “employed violent means to disrupt the normal function of a factory” (Lu 1990). Although Hao did not name any specific environmental mobster, the media generally speculated that the leaders of Houjin Anti-FNC movement were Hao’s primary targets.

In the end of August, 1990, the Minister of Economy Vincent Siew (Xiao Wanchang) announced three promises in exchange for the endorsement of Houjin residents on the construction of the FNC: First, the government acknowledged the fact that the highly polluting refinery has damaged gravely the local living environment; thus it promised to remove the Kaohsiung Refinery from its current site after 25 years (by 2015). Second, the community would receive 1.5 billion NT as compensation; however, this huge sum of money would not go directly into each household as other notorious cases, but would become the endowment for a new community foundation. Third, the Kaohsiung Refinery would raise its environmental

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standard under the supervision of the newly established EPA. It was also suggested that a third-party monitor organization be formed by scholars and Houjin leaders. In addition to these three terms, the CPC also promised that it would completely dismantle the Second Naptha Cracker—the most polluting plant within the Refinery—once the FNC started running.

September came. Nearly one thousand police force and security guards were deployed to Houjin to maintain "the order." Two movement leaders, Huang Tiansheng and Cai Chaopeng, were indicted of violating the Parade and Assembly Law at a rally held on September 3. Also, rumor had it that district police and intelligent agents had locked their aim on several activists who were most resolute in anti-FNC stance (Cui, 1990). In mid-September Premier Hao visited Houjin for the first time and stayed overnight in the residence of a local KMT politician. A week later on September 22, the FNC construction was started, safeguarded by six thousand anti-riot police. Repressed by the state apparatus, most Houjin residents were passive; only twelve people dared to gather and hold a silent protest in front of the Refinery through that evening.

In the months following the construction of the FNC, Houjin's environmental movement transfigured from mass protest to what James Scott famously termed the "everyday resistance" of the weak (Scott 1985; cited in Fox and Starn 1997:3). The third-party monitor organization did not materialize because none of the previous leaders was interested in cooperating with the CPC on a long-term basis. As the ambiance of state terror and defeatism still pervaded the community, local residents were reluctant to touch any topic related to the FNC in my conversations with them. "It is over, what more can we say/do?" was the common response to my inquiry about their evaluation of the FNC project. Nonetheless, behind the disguise of compliance hid a persistent sentiment of opposition only manifest in folk religion.

Folk religion had played a significant role in mobilizing, financing and strategizing over the course of the anti-FNC protest. The most notable examples occurred in December 1987 when Songjiang Zhen, the temple's traditional martial

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arts performance group, was deployed to protect the west-gate blockade and on the evening of the referendum in May 1990 when elderly residents initiated a worship ceremony in Fengping Gong to pray for solidarity and perseverance of the community (Weller and Hsiao 1998:94-97). In November 1990, several women residents reported that they had received messages from god, often in dreams, who told them that their fight against the CPC must continue otherwise a catastrophe would befall in the neighborhood. The head shaman of the community temple—Mu—also received the same message about the impending catastrophe. Alarmed by Mu's prophecy, a village meeting was held in front of the temple courtyard on January 6, 1991. Various community leaders including the five precinct directors (lizhang) were asked to clarify their positions amid the antagonism between Houjin and the CPC in front of the public. During the gathering while an elderly lizhang was speaking in intentionally vague terms, shaman Mu suddenly entered a trance. He delivered that the community must do two things to avoid the impending disaster: first, the community must hold a public ritual to pray for blessing and forgiveness from god (forgiveness because they lose the battle against the CPC). Second, Houjin residents must rally to Taipei again to stop the FNC construction. A couple days later in the middle of the public prayer, Mu shifted into a trance state again; this time he led the locals to march to the Refinery. When the police came and attempted to stop the march by threatening to arrest the participants, some women cried, "How can you arrest us? It is God who sent us here! Do you dare to arrest god?" Even though these small and often random incidents did not develop into any organized action, resistance sentiment lingered in the community throughout the entire 1990s.

The defeat of anti-FNC movement was devastating to the activists for reasons beyond environmental concerns. Most significantly they considered themselves failing to protect the homeland and meet the expectation of their folks. One of the leading activists revealed to me, after many years, that after the silent protest of September 22 he ran to his ancestral graveyard and apologized tearfully to the forefathers for being a disappointment. Some of the local leaders who did not stand

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up to the Refinery for fear of state repression in September 1990 had felt the similar remorse afterwards, and they devoted themselves to the second run of movement in the 2000s to make up for their incapacity a decade ago (field notes, July 15, 2004). Immediate defeat notwithstanding, the three years of endurance had earned Houjin a positive image that would become the asset for the future environmental campaign. Contrary to the general patterns of the 1980s anti-pollution protests—short-lived and compensation- or solution-oriented—the longevity of the Houjin anti-FNC movement was exceptional, and seeking instant monetary return was never on its priority agenda (see Hsiao 1994). Even Pei Boyu, the then director of the Kaohsiung Refinery, gave tribute to the Houjin activists, for their unbendable spirit in the environmental battle was an indispensable force that pushed the significant pollution abatement of the Refinery (Lin 1990).

SECOND PERIOD OF POPULAR MOBILIZATION: 2004

It was seventeen years since Huang and his friends first marched to the north gate of the Kaohsiung Refinery, and almost fourteen years since the construction of FNC began. Taiwan, as is well known, had been through numerous power transfers in its political institutions. The DPP was no longer the opposition party after the 2000 presidential election, although still the minority in the congress. In Kaohsiung, this southern "green" city, the DPP had always enjoyed the majority support.

Besides the regime change, the decade following the 1980s also witnessed a change of orientation in Kaohsiung's urban development: Place-marketing, which entails "the deliberate manipulation of material and visual culture" (Marston et al. 2002:127), became the overarching theme of urban planning since the tenure (1998-2005.2) of Frank C.T. Hsieh (Xie Changting). Through concerted efforts in urban renewal and cultural production, the city strove to overcome its previous stigma of heavy industrial pollution by redefining and marketing itself as the "Maritime Capital" so it could attract tourists and new forms of revenues in replacement of its quickly dismantled manufacturing and industrial sectors.

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Along with the political and economic transitions, Houjin's status shifted from the "environmental mobsters" to the "holy land of Taiwanese environmentalism," as inscribed on the wall of its modern community center, built in 1994 with money donated by the CPC.[8] Outside the community, most of the manufacturing factories once packed in Nanzi Export Processing Zone were outsourced to Southeast Asia or mainland China, and the remaining ones hired mostly foreign guest workers from Thailand or Vietnam. The city of Kaohsiung, like many industrial centers in the west, was facing harsh challenges of deindustrialization. In an attempt to restructure its economy from manufacturing-based to clean industry such as tourism, the city government held its first Municipal Cultural Festival in 2000. Houjin was chosen to be the location for the Festival, named "Ganwei Hui" (The Sweet Year-End Gathering) which referred to the old-time harvest festival held during the New Year period. Sponsored by the Kaohsiung Culture Center (now the Bureau of Cultural Affairs of Kaohsiung City Government), the Festival included an assembly of folk music performance, Taiwanese opera "Ko-a-hi," as well as traditional Yuan-hsiao celebration. The Cultural Center also funded the construction of Houjin Cultural and History Museum and the publication of Houjin Da Daizhi (The Chronicle of Houjin) which documents the history of the community since the 17th century (Zheng 2000). The three-year period of anti-FNC movement was featured in a distinct section in both the Houjin museum and The Chronicle of Houjin. According to the main organizer of the Festival, then a divisional director at the Kaohsiung Culture Center, among the 200-some neighborhood communities in Kaohsiung City, Houjin was the most intact. He explained that the collective memory of the anti-FNC movement helped bound Houjin residents together. Therefore the Culture Center decided to support the establishment of Houjin museum so the rich historical documents and cultural artifacts hidden in the community households could be collected and displayed (field notes, July 13, 2004). In other words, the oppositional history of the anti-FNC movement was celebrated as an invaluable cultural heritage of the city famous for its anti-KMT mentality; Houjin's struggle against the industrial pollution was now framed as the collective sacrifice made by the working-class majority for Taiwan's economic growth.

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Against this backdrop, I revisited Houjin with no expectation of any organized protest; my main objective was to investigate whether its environmental quality had been improved after the political transition. Therefore I was surprised to discover the resurgence of popular mobilizing in this community. This time, the concerns arose from media speculation that the Ministry of Economy and the CPC were planning to expand and upgrade the Kaohsiung Refinery, instead of dismantling it as promised in 1990.

To raise the public awareness of this impending issue, a community meeting was held in the conference room underneath Houjin's communal temple on June 18, 2004. At eight o'clock at night, over 120 people sat around the long tables; about 20 were women. Most of the attendees were in their 50s or older. Many of them wore t-shirts given by Liu Wen-xiong, the DPP congressman whose constituency was in northern Kaohsiung, and who was campaigning for the end-of-year congress election.

Li Yukun, the chief executive of Houjin's temple committee, explained the purpose of this meeting:

> *Removing the Kaohsiung Refinery was the promise made by the government fourteen years ago in exchange of our conditional support of the construction of the FNC. At that time under tremendous pressure from the military premier [Hao Bocun], we had no choice but bended down to compromise. Our generation has lived with the pollution through our lives. The only consoling thought we had at that moment was, "if our endurance for another 25 years of pollution could trade for a completely clean environment for our next generation, then we are willing to make this sacrifice." However, the rumors seem to indicate that the CPC has no intention to leave; not only that, it is planning to expand the Refinery. So we must gather again and show our collective will and determination to the CPC* (field notes, June 18, 2004)*!*

Li's prelude set the tone for the meeting. The local leaders, including the city councilman elected in this district and the five lizhangs,[9] all expressed their

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objections to the CPC's breach of prior agreement. One of them reminded the audience that even though the ruling party had changed at the central level, the government must keep the promise made 14 years ago. It seemed that removing the Refinery was the mainstream opinion and supported by all local factions, including the temple committee, precinct offices, and the community association (which was funded by the 1990 endowment from the CPC).

On June 23, seventeen years from the day the anti-FNC movement started, Houjin held a demonstration in the name of commemorating the past movement and for the purpose of restating their demand for removing the Refinery from the area. The demonstration began in the temple courtyard with half-hour screening of a documentary about the anti-FNC movement. Then the crowd of three hundreds headed out to the north gate of the Refinery, where they encountered the police. Unlike the tense and solemn atmosphere prevailing in the street protests of the late 1980s, however, there was not much confrontation between the crowd, the police, and the Refinery guards. The crowd knew well how to proceed and how to conclude the demonstration; policemen were quite relaxed in their handling, and Refinery managers were polite if nonchalant. All parties involved seemed to have performed well their respective roles based upon sort of script shaped through the near two decades of social movement experience.

Comparing my 1990 notes with that of 2004, I was struck by two sharp contrasts in the "vocabulary of protest" (Guha 1997:26). First, most apparent of all was the change in public perception that the Refinery was no longer the engine of economy; rather, it was viewed as a drag of local development. Several residents responded to my interview in frustration that the property value of Houjin had declined over the past decade, while at the same time many neighborhoods in northern Kaohsiung—thanks to the new town projects—had profited from the fast growing real estate market. The fact that Houjin was contained by the walls of the Refinery, they reasoned, limited its potential to grow. Furthermore, buyers were generally unwilling to invest in a property close to the Refinery for health and safety concerns. In the mean time, the role of the CPC being the biggest financer for Houjin had

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diminished due to the fluctuation in interest rate. Over the 15 years the annual interests generated from the 1990 settlement gradually decreased, thus straining the operation of Houjin community association. Some leaders actually saw this good timing to wean the community from its financial tie with the CPC. Li Yukun as an example told me that the temple committee would be fully capable of taking care of the normal functioning of the community center should the Refinery move.

Secondly, rather than perceiving the government as the repressive force to the people, the residents in 2004 were confident that the public service sectors—specifically the city government and the Ministry of Economy—would not dare to ignore their voices if they were loud enough. Indeed, a couple of DPP politicians participated in several protests. While they were intentionally vague about which side they were on—the Refinery or Houjin—they generally encouraged the residents to voice their concerns and objections to the city and central governments. “This is democracy” one legislator said, and “if enough people insist that the Refinery should move, then the DPP government will not let you down.” In a mild confrontation between Huang, the principal leader of this movement, and an officer from the Environmental Protection Bureau of Kaohsiung city government, the latter pleaded to Huang: “please don’t scold at us anymore. We are all trying our best to improve the quality of this land. A lot of young people inside the Refinery are working very hard to reduce the polluting emission and clean up the residual toxics” (field notes, July 15, 2004). It was quite notable that she did not categorize Huang’s actions as “irrational” and “obstructive to public affairs” like what the past city mayor said in 1987 (N.A., 1987); on the contrary, she acknowledged the rationales behind Huang’s mission—to improve the living environment of the community—and reassured him that the government, and even the CPC, were on his side working towards the same end.

In the 1980s, Houjin was seen as a peasant community carrying resistance identity against the establishment. The residents were frequently called “villagers” even though they lived in the city (for example, Ye 1990:10-11). A national survey conducted in September 1990 posed the controversy surrounding the FNC project as

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a zero-sum choice between "the environment," as Houjin's communal welfare, and "the economy," as the overall benefits of the wider society. Under this premise, 88% of the interviewees said the FNC should be constructed notwithstanding the environmental cost (United Daily News Poll Center, 1990). In 2004, by contrast, the call for removing the Kaohsiung Refinery from the Houjin neighborhood was no longer perceived radical but had gained a certain level of respect and concurrence from the municipal. This change of official attitude was correlated with the direction of urban redevelopment of Kaohsiung, in which various green space projects were executed to boost tourism and counter the city's depressing economy amid deindustrialization (Lee 2007:128). Houjin's leaders appropriated the new developmentalism of the municipal in their movement narratives. On several occasions they argued that the emptied lot of the Refinery would become a highly valuable property for the city sabotaged by a shortage of green space.

In her exemplary study, Nash (2005) noted a general trend in current social movements, that the goals and causes for mobilization be casted in "universal terms" (p.2) in the often local- or community-based organizations. This effort in seeking "reintegration in the new global alignments," she contended, would help deprived groups gain more moral currency in their struggle for autonomy (p.1). Similarly, Houjin activists highlighted the association between their local resistance and global causes, most notably the idea of sustainable development which "measures progress in relation to advances in human welfare" (Nash 2005:5). At the same time, their dreams and visions for the community were rooted in place. The experience of the 1980s anti-FNC movement was integral to the identity of Houjin and its people, and constituted the communal heritage that the activists in the 2000s vowed to succeed. Indigenism of Houjin—the argument that their ancestors settled in the place long before the Refinery and the fight was to protect their ancestors' land—was central to the moral currency of the campaign for relocating the Refinery. Disputing the CPC's argument that removing the Kaohsiung Refinery would result in thousands of job loss of the area, Li claimed, "worse comes worse, we will simply return to the agricultural lifestyle similar to how our ancestors lived—what's so bad about that scenario!" (field notes, June 28, 2004)

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CONCLUSION

As Brosius (1999:283) indicates, environmental discourses evolve rapidly for they are constantly positioned and repositioned within the fields of knowledge between the local and the global. Over the course of nearly two decades of struggle, the positioning of Houjin in the wider elements of civil society also changed as the protesters deployed various discourses at different times in their battle against the Kaohsiung Refinery. As one leader said, Houjin was "the abandoned child of Kaohsiung" before 1990 (Lin 1990). In its 1980s protest, Houjin was identified as a "village" outside the urbanized area; its environmental battle was analogous to a social justice movement for the weak and marginal. Even the sympathizers viewed the contest between Houjin and the CPC as a difficult choice between the marginal community's environmental rights and the broader society's economic benefits. In the 2000s, Houjin had become an integral part of the city, even if seen as old and underdeveloped. The quality of its habitation was not only a communal health issue; it would influence the overall development of the Kaohsiung city. Activists also connected their environmental causes with economic values, seeing their battle as beneficial to Kaohsiung's urban redevelopment. No longer the helpless victims waiting for the recovery of conscience of the state and the powerful corporation, Houjin residents proceeded to propose their visions as the alternatives to the previous scheme of community planning. When asked what they would recommend for the emptied site should the Refinery move, some community leaders raised the idea of "smokestackless industry" by suggesting, even just in passing, that the vast land would be perfect for Taiwan's first Disneyland; others preferred an environmental remediation program to restore the battered land.

EPILOGUE

On August 13, 2008, the Ministry of Economy made an official statement that the government will keep the 1990 promise and remove the Kaohsiung Refinery from the current location by 2015. Responding to this long awaited announcement, Houjin leaders reorganized their protest organization into an environmental monitoring board,

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thus concluding the two-decade long battle. I visited Houjin in June 2009 and dined with three leading protestors. They have been best friends since childhood, and the struggle against the CPC, from everyday resistance such as sneaking into the Refinery to organized protests, has shadowed much of the course of their friendship. While sitting in Zheng's porch, I smelled a peculiar odor in the air like what was described in the epigraph. Out of instinct I bended down to check the gas stove, just when Zheng reminded me that this was the smell they had lived with on a nearly everyday basis. We went over some archival protest photos taken during the various demonstrations in 1987; many of the wrinkled faces in the pictures were already deceased, including the two elders who were held in short custody on the October protest outside of the Legislature Yuan in 1987 (and who chastised their children to continue the battle according to the *Taiwan Communique* report). I tossed to Liu, "remember you once told me that you would not live long enough to see the Refinery move? Now it seems like you will outlive it!" Liu smiled wryly, "don't forget there are still six years ahead…" Despite Liu's over-cautious reaction, public hearings—facilitated by the city council and joined with Houjin community organizations, Kaohsiung environmental organizations, and the city's public sectors—concerning cleanup, restoration, and future uses of the site of the Refinery have been underway, even if lacking enthusiastic participation of the CPC. As some readers commented in an online forum on the news regarding the relocation plan, Houjin and other *guk-bok-lok's* in Zuoying and Nanzi districts of northern Kaohsiung are waiting to get on the road of new development and become the city's new center (N/A 2007).

NOTES

1. There is an enormous literature on the social and political transitions in 1980s Taiwan. For two comprehensive reviews, see Mau-kuei Chang (1994) and Cheng-kuang Hsu and Wen-li Sung, eds. (1989).
2. The martial law was officially lifted on July 15, 1987, two weeks after the first march organized by Houjin residents.
3. I apply the definition given in Escobar (2008:30) that place-based identity refers to the

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attachment to place, as "the engagement with and experience of a particular location with some measure of groundedness…, boundaries…, and connections to everyday life."

4. These included most of the "first generation of major environmental organizations" (Weller and Hsiao 1998:88): Taiwan Greenpeace, Taiwan Environmental Protection Union (TEPU), Social Movements Office, and Consumers' Foundation. Nian Xilin, a high school teacher who led the Lukang residents to stop DuPont from building a factory in town and a core member of Taiwan Greenpeace, had worked closely with Houjin activists in 1987-1988. Also, medical students and interns from National Taiwan University, Kaohsiung Medical University, Yang Ming Medical University, and National Cheng Kung University, have all helped the Houjin movement in various capacities (Wang 1990).
5. This description was written before the Red Line of the Kaohsiung Mass Rapid Transit (KMRT)—which passes through Houjin's outskirt—started regular service in April 2008. Even though most Houjin residents have yet to use the KMRT as their main mode of transportation (field notes, June 14, 2009), its construction has certainly affected the landscape and spatial politics of Houjin neighborhood to a degree that can only be determined through further investigation.
6. The information about the three-year process of Houjin movement came mainly from newspaper reports and key participants' retrospective interviews.
7. Even though most households in Houjin had had tap water by the 1980s, the water quality was dubious just like that of the entire northern Kaohsiung at that time. The CPC Kaohsiung Refinery, on the contrary, had its own source of clean water from upstream Gaoping River (the major river in Kaohsiung and Pingtung area). So the tap water installation starting in 1988 was a friendly gesture of the Kaohsiung Refinery to share with Houjin its exclusive water resource.
8. The CPC spent 230million NT dollars on the construction of Houjin's community center, which had a gym, swimming pool, karaoke, conference rooms, and sports equipments. It was to fulfill part of the agreement made in 1990, that the CPC would provide the same level of recreational facilities to Houjin residents as available to the Refinery employees.
9. These were not the same lizhangs in 1990. The old lizhangs of the 1980s had mostly passed away.

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