

**The Taiwan Railway Cultural Routes:  
Localising Cultural Routes and Developing Colonial Heritage into Heritage Industry**

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

ICOMOS: International Council of Monuments and Sites

AHD: authorized heritage discourse

KMT: Kuomintang

PRC: People's Republic of China

OECD: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization

AFRCHO: Alishan Forest Railway and Cultural Heritage Office

TECRIJ: Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office in Japan

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## Introduction

Since the International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) proposed the concept of “Cultural Routes” in 2008 in the expanding heritage notion, the heritage discourse has spread from Europe to Asia and other continents. Cultural Routes highlight the interactive and dynamic process of intercultural relationships. The “dynamic of movement” and the “idea of exchanges” with continuity in space and time are the central values (Durusoy, 2014, 5). Cultural Routes provide the framework for heritage practice to cross national boundaries, regions, and districts. With such a concept in heritage discourse, routes have started to be preserved or developed, which inevitably involved institutions and organized management.

A significant example of Cultural Routes in Europe is “the Santiago de Compostela Pilgrim Routes”<sup>1</sup>. They convey the “Outstanding Universal Value”<sup>2</sup> of an interconnected network with an immense importance for the Christian world. However, some scholars have criticised that, on the one hand, the actual cultural heritage projects have developed into a pan-European identity paradigm instead of multiculturalism (Grabow, 2010, 110); on the other hand, a cultural route may either be established along with a historical or a newly created trail for the purpose of tourism (Durusoy, 2014, 20). In short, Cultural Routes are used to shape specific identities and to facilitate tourism in heritage projects, while the concept values human mobility, inter-connectivity, and openness as well.

ICOMOS defined the Cultural Routes and formed the Authorized Heritage Discourse (AHD) in privileging the innate aesthetic and scientific value of heritage (Smith, 2006, 87). This AHD has shaped the heritage practice worldwide, yet and raised concerns about such a new framework of heritage among the academic field. On the one hand, the guidelines of Cultural Routes are used to identify some ancient routes as heritage resources worthy of conservation (Al-Kadi, 2016, 84), while it has been proved that Cultural Routes today serve as a source of innovation, local income generation, and cultural tourism product development in Europe, even though they are founded on social and cultural principles (Khovanova-Rubicondo, 2012, 83). In developing countries, particularly where heritage sites are widely spread throughout rural areas, Cultural Routes are commonly used to link small sites into a package that can improve the tourism potential (Snowball & Courtney, 2010, 574). In general, these literatures show multiple practices of Cultural Routes in different contexts. These studies are important, because actual cases reveal the cultural process of heritage. In fact, heritage is neither a thing nor a site; rather, it is a cultural process that engages with the acts of remembering and forgetting (Smith, 2016, 44).

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<sup>1</sup> A network of four Christian pilgrimage routes in northern Spain. It includes a built heritage of historical importance created to meet the needs of pilgrims, including cathedrals, churches, hospitals, hostels.

<sup>2</sup> Outstanding Universal Value means cultural and/or natural significance, which is so exceptional as to transcend boundaries and be common important in all humanity’s present and future generations.

“Building Taiwan Cultural Routes”(打造台灣文化路徑)<sup>3</sup> is a policy that the Taiwanese Ministry of Culture proposed in 2016. Cultural Routes were adopted in order to boost Taiwan’s tourism and cultural and creative industries<sup>4</sup>. Furthermore, Building Taiwan Cultural Routes serves as a supporting policy to facilitate current heritage practices and industries. So far, the Taiwan Railway Cultural Routes is the most completed theme of this policy, which has been developed by several Taiwan official organisations, such as the Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office in Japan (TECRIJ)<sup>5</sup> and the Alishan Forest Railway and Cultural Heritage Office (AFRCHO)<sup>6</sup>. In this study, I focus on the adoption and practices of Cultural Routes and my main research question reads: “how Taiwan officials have adopted the heritage discourse of Cultural Routes with a particular focus on railway routes”. It is also noteworthy that the scale of such localisation is smaller than the ICOMOS’s narratives, which are grand and transnational. Thus, this study provides the example of officially localising Cultural Routes within a small scale.

By focusing on the function of Cultural Routes rather than on their values, the Taiwanese Ministry of Culture accepted this AHD in order to align with ICOMOS. The Ministry of Culture also engaged citizens in this policy, representing a positive case of localisation of Cultural Routes. With the feature of citizen participation in Taiwan’s policy-making process, participants express their concerns about using Taiwan Cultural Routes to solve regional problems.

At the same time, Chinese tourists have dramatically decreased due to the increased tension between China and Taiwan since 2016, while Japanese tourists have grown and become the most influential group of the tourism industry in Taiwan. Therefore, the promotion of Taiwan Cultural Routes has strategically engaged Japan because of the positive relationship between Japan and Taiwan in the post-colonial time. I study the Taiwan Railway Cultural Routes as research case as this is the most complete theme during the practice of this policy from 2016 to 2020. It is noteworthy that Taiwan’s railways are the production of Japanese colonial time (1895-1945). The practice of Building Taiwan Cultural Routes also redefines and reimagines the Japanese colonial heritages in terms of Taiwanese identities. Rather than viewing Taiwan railways as neutral objects, I portray such heritage as a cultural process that engages with remembering and understanding in the present (Smith, 2006, 44). The Taiwan Railway Cultural Routes case provides an example of how Taiwan officials strategically have use colonial heritage to highlight the story of multi-cultures and promote soft power in post-colonial times.

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<sup>3</sup> “Building Taiwan Cultural Routes”(打造臺灣文化路徑) is designed to boost the cultural economy via enhancing cultural connotation. The descriptions are 1. Cooperating with heritages, venues, and the “smart city” policy by integrating different departments and virtual entities on the internet and building multiple themes of cultural routes; and 2. enhancing the quality, output value, and additional value of the tourism industry to improve all kinds of cultural facilities (see page 10-3 in the administrative plan).

<sup>4</sup> cultural and creative industry (文化創意產業) in Taiwan adopts the British cultural industry but includes a broader definition of culture. The development of Taiwan’s cultural and creative industry will be elaborated in Chapter 1.

<sup>5</sup> Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office in Japan (台北駐日經濟文化代表處). Retrieved from [https://www.roc-taiwan.org/us\\_en/index.html](https://www.roc-taiwan.org/us_en/index.html)

<sup>6</sup> Alishan Forest Railway and Cultural Heritage Office (阿里山森林鐵路與文化資產管理處). Retrieved from <https://afrch.forest.gov.tw/En>

I analyse three Taiwanese official organisations related to the Taiwan Railway Cultural Routes in this research. First, the Ministry of Culture is the core of formulating the project of Building Taiwan Cultural Routes, which generally focuses on the functions of this heritage concept. Second, AFRCHO has managed the Alishan Forest Railways for a long time, which overlaps the development of the Taiwan Cultural Routes. With AFRCHO's long-term practice, the values of daily work with routes are added. Third, TECRIJ serves as an important organisation of remaining the relationship between Japan and Taiwan. In this respect, the Taiwan Cultural Routes became a good topic for facilitating the promotion of Taiwan's beauty and identities. Although three organisations belong to different departments, their practices related to each other and co-construct the narratives of Taiwan Railway Cultural Routes. I suggest viewing the three organisations as a pluralistic whole to shed light on the cultural process of Cultural Routes within the Taiwan context.

The research is organised into three chapters. After the introduction including the thesis structure and the methodology, I will review Taiwan's heritage policies, cultural and creative industries, and their relationships in Chapter 1. Thereafter, in Chapter 2, I will compare the discourses of ICOMOS and the Ministry of Culture concerning Cultural Routes. I will analyse the discourses of Cultural Routes in these institutions. In Chapter 3, the case study of Taiwan Railway Cultural Routes will be carried out via discourse analysis of the promotions, including a promotion video of the Alishan Forest Railway (2020), and an online Taiwan Railway Cultural Routes exhibition (2020). This chapter focuses on how Taiwan officials produced and spread stories, which largely differs from the narratives of government plans. Instead, these stories are quite touching and innocuous. Finally, the conclusion summarizes the arguments of the present study and illustrates the future development of the research.

This research builds upon the qualitative documentary analysis of primary sources, such as the *ICOMOS Charter of Cultural Routes*<sup>7</sup> and the *Administration Plans*<sup>8</sup> of the Taiwanese Ministry of Culture, which explains the details and reveal the discourses of the two institutions. Another valuable source is *The Report of the Workshops of Promoting Taiwan Cultural Routes*<sup>9</sup>, which records the opinions of participants who participated in the workshop about building Taiwan Cultural Routes.

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<sup>7</sup> *ICOMOS Charter on Cultural Routes (2008)*. Retrieved December 10, 2020, from [https://www.icomos.org/charters/culturalroutes\\_e.pdf](https://www.icomos.org/charters/culturalroutes_e.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> 中華民國文化部施政計畫民國 105-109 年(Administrative Plans of the Ministry of Culture, Taiwan (ROC) (2016-2020)). Retrieved December 10, 2020, from [https://www.moc.gov.tw/informationlist\\_285.html](https://www.moc.gov.tw/informationlist_285.html).

<sup>9</sup> 推動台灣文化路徑願景工作坊審議結論(The Report of the Workshops of Promoting Taiwan Cultural Routes). Retrieved December 10, 2020, from <https://themefile.culture.tw/file/2019-11-29/447ee27c-89b1-40d5-b5ae-fc64a47cdcd6/%E5%84%AA%E6%9C%B5%20%E5%AF%A9%E8%AD%B0%E7%B5%90%E8%AB%96.pdf>.

The research is also based on discourse and image analysis of valuable sources. First, *The Railway Routes Section of the Exhibition of Taiwan Cultural Routes*<sup>10</sup> shows how TECRIJ promoted Taiwan Cultural Routes to Japanese tourists. Second, the film, *The Heart of Alishan Forest Railway*<sup>11</sup>, sheds light on the narratives of AFRCHO that targeted domestic citizens. Both sources were published by the Taiwan official organisations, but tell the stories of Cultural Routes in a very different way compared to the narratives of government plans of the Ministry of Culture. In this respect, TECRIJ and AFRCHO added more possibilities into the Taiwan Cultural Routes.

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<sup>10</sup> 「台湾鉄道写真展」と「心に残る台湾の鉄道切符展」オンライン展示(Online Exhibition of “The Photography Exhibition of Taiwan Railway” and “The railway ticket exhibition”). Retrieved April 20, 2021, from [https://jp.taiwan.culture.tw/information\\_34\\_111336.html](https://jp.taiwan.culture.tw/information_34_111336.html).

<sup>11</sup> 林鐵之心(The Heart of Alishan Forest Railway). Retrieved May10, 2021, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CZVrf66qQMk&t=1213s>



## Chapter 1 Adopting the heritage concept in relation to cultural economy

In the *Administrative Plan (2016-2020)* of the Taiwanese Ministry of Culture, “Building Taiwan Cultural Routes” was one of the key policies that aimed to boost the cultural economy via connecting heritage sites, museums, and other venues, such as historical centres. Cultural Routes is a European import proposed by ICOMOS in 2008 to emphasize the values of territorial scale and the macrostructure of heritage, featuring connections and contributions by diverse social actors (ICOMOS, 2008). Nevertheless, the Ministry of Culture connected it to the cultural economy along with the rise of the cultural and creative industries in Taiwan, which shows that its value for improving the tourism industry is more meaningful than its value for rethinking the heritage framework for the Ministry of Culture.

In order to address the meaning of Building Taiwan Cultural Routes, I would like to provide parallel historical reviews of heritage policies (1920s-2020) and cultural and creative industries (1990s-2020), outlined in Sections 1 and 2 of this chapter. Then, in Section 3, I argue that this adoption can be seen as a step towards the industrialisation of heritage. Especially with the notions of cultural itineraries and thematic routes connecting to Cultural Routes, this heritage concept is adopted to valorise cultural tourism. Furthermore, this adoption is not only valuable for the economic sector, but also contributes to the development of national identity in Taiwan. Building Taiwan Cultural Routes highlights the national significance that provides people with an alternative to develop de-sinicized identities.

### 1.1 Historical review of heritage policies in Taiwan (1920s-2020)

The earliest heritage policy in Taiwan began in the 1920s under the Japanese Empire’s governance. The Taiwan General Government Office issued the *Regulations Governing the Historic Sites and Natural Monument Conservation*<sup>12</sup>, which adopted the European system of heritage preservation. At that time, the Japanese Empire was influenced by the German concept of *Heimatschutz* (homeland protection) (Ting, 2019, 5). In addition, the colonial government extended the law<sup>13</sup> and launched a scientific investigation of Taiwan’s historical sites. In this period, such a “modern” heritage preservation was mainly advocated by scholars to protect some tangible heritage, while there were many new colonial constructions in Taiwan (Huang, 2012, 221).

The legislation of heritage preservation by the Taiwanese government started in the 1970s. However, it is necessary to extend the timeline of the historical review of heritage policies back to 1950, because it was through the efforts of intellectuals ever since the 1950s that led to the preservation movement in the

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<sup>12</sup> Regulations Governing the Historic Sites and Natural Monument Conservation (史蹟名勝天然紀念物在台施行令)

<sup>13</sup> Enforcement Rules of the Historic Sites and Natural Monuments Conservation (史蹟名勝天然紀念物保存法暨取扱規程)

1970s. Scholars had critically pointed out that the cultural policies during the 1950s-1970s were distorted due to the Kuomintang (KMT; Chinese Nationalist Party) rule starting in 1949 following the Japanese colonial period (1895-1945). In this period, Taiwanese heritage was marginalized, due to the competition to represent authentic Chinese culture between the KMT and the People's Republic of China (PRC) (Chiang, Huang, Huang& Hsiao, 2017, 234).

Taiwanese intellectuals were the central impetus of the preservation movement in the 1970s. Two structural factors allowed the movement to happen. First, the cultural factor was that the young generation born in the post-war baby boomer period accepted the emergence of local cultural identity. Second, the rapid urbanization in Taiwan after WWII resulted in an adverse effect by 1970, such as the destruction of traditional architectures and historical landscapes (Chen & Fu, 2015, 66). In short, the crisis of heritage loss had stimulated the will of intellectuals to “safeguard” heritage, which led to the institutionalisation of heritage preservation in Taiwan.

In the 1980s, two significant points marked the formalised era of heritage: the establishment of the Council for Cultural Affairs in 1981, and the *Cultural Heritage Preservation Act*<sup>14</sup>, implemented in 1982 (revised seven times for the last 39 years). It is noteworthy that the official term to refer to cultural heritage was “wenhua zichan” (文化資產), which literally means “cultural assets”, implying that they were endowed with productivity and economic values. Wang (2004, 792) asserted cultural asset in its literal sense implies a kind of cultural capital, which is indispensable both for the distinction of the nation from other nations, and for the production/reproduction of the nation itself. In other words, the institutionalisation of heritage preservation can be related to the intention of reproducing a new identity that should be different from the PRC under the KMT government. This intention did not lead quickly to a more locally-based narrative. Rather, the KMT adopted the concept of an authentic cultural “China” and listed sites that contributed to the historical connection with that country (Chiang, Huang, Huang& Hsiao, 2017, 237).

During the 1990s, Taiwan's heritage conservation was basically the by-product of three key policies. First, the “Community Empowerment Project”<sup>15</sup> in 1994, created by the Council for Cultural Affairs, addressed the concept of community in a local approach. Second, the “Revitalization of Traditional Commercial Districts Project”<sup>16</sup> in 1995, operated by the Ministry of Economic Affairs, intended to enhance traditional and local businesses' profit that were threatened by the development of wholesalers. Third, the “Townscape Renaissance Project”<sup>17</sup> in 1997, launched by the Council of Economic Planning and Development of the Executive Yuan, aimed at improving local characteristics and local economic

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<sup>14</sup> Cultural Heritage Preservation Act (文化資產保存法) Retrieved April 27,2021, from <https://law.moj.gov.tw/ENG/LawClass/LawAll.aspx?pcode=H0170001>

<sup>15</sup> Community Empowerment Project (社區總體營造) Retrieved April 27 ,2021, from <https://zh.wikipedia.org/zh-hant/%E7%A4%BE%E5%8D%80%E7%B8%BD%E9%AB%94%E7%87%9F%E9%80%A0>

<sup>16</sup> Revitalization of Traditional Commercial Districts Project (傳統商圈振興計畫)

<sup>17</sup> Townscape Renaissance Project (創造城鄉新風貌行動方案)

development (Go & Lai, 2019, 81). The 1990s was the “era of localism” (Chiang, Huang, Huang & Hsiao, 2017, 238). That is why Jacobs (2005, 5) employed the term “Taiwanization” with particular reference to a focus on Taiwan as opposed to China. The heritage practice within this context in transition also experienced innovative changes. Chen & Fu (2015, 67) illustrated several milestones of heritage practice in the 1990s, including adopting the Transfer Development of Right (TDR) system (a localized monument designation method), the monument adaptive reuse, and the opening of new channels of citizen participation. The destruction of monuments in the 1999 due to an earthquake also led to the amendment of the *Cultural Heritage Preservation Act* that referenced the European experiences. The category “historical buildings” was added, and a “historical building registration system” was introduced to protect heritage from further disasters.

From 2000 through 2020, Taiwan officials modified the *Cultural Heritage Preservation Act* with regard to more diverse and progressive perspectives. The fifth amendment in 2005 was a particular turning point that revised the structure of heritage preservation, for example, expanding the definition of cultural heritage including the industrial, transportation and water conservation landscapes, which can be marked as consolidating intangible heritage. Also, the amendment emphasized the active reuse of cultural heritage in response to international principles (Chen & Fu, 2015, 71). While there were more and more cases of reusing heritage sites, the phenomenon of enhancing access to and use of publicly owned heritage due to the commercial reasons is also noteworthy (Chiang, Huang, Huang & Hsiao, 2017, 243).

Taiwanese officials initially proposed combining heritage together with cultural and creative industries to improve cultural tourism in the “Challenge 2008 National Development Plan”<sup>18</sup>. In the plan, five industrial heritage sites would be planned as “cultural and creative industries parks”(文化創意產業園區) that provide platforms for linking artistic works with tourists. For example, the Huashan 1914 Cultural and Creative Industries Park (Figure 1) was initially the wine factories and were reused for arts. However, the plan merely reused heritage as a background for cultural industries (Yin, 2008, 81). Many heritage sites became tourist attractions by offering recreation and accommodation and many industrial heritage sites were used only as hubs for promoting cultural and creative industries.

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<sup>18</sup> Challenge 2008 National Development Plan (挑戰 2008:國家重點發展計畫)



Figure 1 The Huashan1914 Cultural and Creative Industries Park (Source: The Facebook Page of Huashan 1914 Cultural and Creative Industries Park.)

Yet, heritage not only contributed to the valorisation of cultural and creative industry and cultural tourism but it also became connected to nationalism. For example, Yao (2019, 81) argues that a local heritage known as the Hayashi Department Store (Figure 2) creates the historical and regional significance of Tainan City, which links different local communities together and motivates them to share a common value and history. Thus, heritage in Taiwan serves as an agent of the “imagined community” (Anderson, 1983, 207).



Figure 2 Hayashi Department Store (Source: The website of the Hayashi Department Store)

## 1.2 The rise of cultural and creative industries in Taiwan (1990s-2020)

The concept of “cultural industries” was first proposed to critically define the phenomenon of commercialization of culture (Horkheimer, Adorno, & Schmid Noeri, 2002 [1944]). Then this

phenomenon was redefined by the notion of “creative industries” proposed by the British government, which focused on economic benefits embedded in the economic transformation that noted the increasing activities in the fields of communications, information, entertainment, and leisure in the post-war era (Miller, 2009, 93). The creative industry was adopted as a crucial driver of innovation and economy in Australia, Canada, and many developed countries, including Taiwan. Scholars Chang and Lee (2015, 1096) remarked that the Taiwanese policies were the primary activator of developing cultural and creative industries, which could maintain positive growth even in economic downturns. Therefore, in the following section, I will provide an overview of Taiwan’s cultural and creative policies and examine how they relate to the heritage practice.

The democracy movement emerged in the 1980s. The first presidential election happened in 1996, with citizen and community-based cultural advocacy occurred in the mid-1990s, and neo-liberalisation of the mass media system occurring in the 1990s. This period was a turning point for the industries as the needs of culture raised and many factories moved to Southeast Asia and China. The Taiwanese government was searching for other opportunities for developing different industries. With the European idea of cultural and creative industries spread worldwide, Taiwan was set on an irreversible track and a new cultural strategy was developed in alignment with the “British model” (Tsai, 2018, 98-100). With both the economic uncertainty and the public concern for the preservation of local culture, the 1990s was a transition from the era of restricted speech to more diverse thinking, which stimulated the markets of the cultural economy.

In 2002, the term “cultural and creative industry” was officially proposed by Taiwan’s Council for Cultural Affairs. In the end, a “knowledge-based economy”, which was promoted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), was adopted with the concept of cultural industry. Furthermore, the cultural and creative industry was seen as the most added value of the knowledge-based economy. The difference between “cultural industry” and “cultural and creative industry” is that the former defines culture as the local culture that embodies a certain value of humanity; the latter defines culture as anything that produces its cultural symbols and meanings. In this way, Taiwan’s cultural and creative industry is an industrial policy rather than a cultural policy (Wang, 2005, 185-186). The motivation for promoting such a “industrial policy” was that the cultural and creative industry was an oblique method to counteract the decline of traditional industries, while there was the loss of jobs in manufacturing (Tsai, 2018, 108). In 2003, the Taiwanese government advanced cultural and creative industries by promoting its cooperation with local tourism industries, which appears to be a win-win strategy (Chang & Lee, 2015, 1096).

In 2010, the Taiwanese government introduced the *Cultural and Creative Industries Development Act*.<sup>19</sup> Heritage sites and museums were also classified as a part of the culture and creative industry to enlarge culture and creative economy, named “Cultural assets application and exhibition and performance facility

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<sup>19</sup> Cultural and Creative Industries Development Act (文化創意產業發展法) Retrieved April 27, 2021, from <https://law.moj.gov.tw/LawClass/LawAll.aspx?pcode=h0170075>

industries”<sup>20</sup> in official terms. Reusing heritage sites to connect exhibition and performance was set to be one of the approaches to “create wealth and work opportunities, and to enhance citizens capacity for arts, and elevate the citizens’ living environment”<sup>21</sup>(Ministry of Culture, 2010). Tsai (2018, 126-127) critically interprets this law as a neoliberal legalisation of cultural and creative industries, as it accelerated the expansion of existing profit-driven structures. One of many examples of this is the reuse of artist-led urban industry sites viewed as a model and then developed into cultural and creative industry parks (Li, 2017, 201-202). In reusing heritage sites, there was a tension between using them as “a more communal creativity base” and “a commercial creative theme park”. In the Taiwan context, reusing heritage as cultural and creative industry parks involves efficient usage of public spaces, which is actually about making a profit (Tsai, 2018, 209).

The above researches look into the dynamics of the transformation of heritage and cultural and creative policies illustrates how Taiwan’s heritage policies became intertwined with cultural and creative industries. Since the Taiwan government commonly viewed heritage as an economic resource, it was not easy to reflect a nationalistic ideology. Also, while Taiwan’s industrial heritage was the product of Japanese colonial times, what is lost in the industrialisation of heritage, and what this loss means to public has become an issue.

### **1.3 Industrialisation of heritage**

The “heritage industry” is a term coined by Hewison (1987, 57) describing the phenomenon of producing heritage as a popular entertainment that satisfies the nostalgia of the middle classes, as well as the problem that the United Kingdom manufactured heritage as a product of the nation-state. This phenomenon emerged after the decline of heavy industries that became problematic about urban planning. Transforming those industrial heritages into attractions, rather than demolishing them, was a feasible alternative for planners (Li, 2017, 48-49). Similarly, the development of heritage and tourism was an alternative to the economy, which led to the “heritage boom” in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Harrison, 2013, 69-70).

The process of renovation of heritage in Taiwan was related to economic considerations. Built Japanese heritage was also being used as an added value in economic terms that involved profit mechanisms. This process can be explained within the context of the rise of neoliberal ideas in Taiwan after the 1990s. Such a post-1990s rehabilitation process in Taiwan “saves the built heritage while also making it relevant to the present, both socially and economically” (Zorzin, 2020, 283).

The role of heritage tourism in Taiwan works as a driving force in the economic section as well as a tool for de-Sinicize nationalism. For the economic sector, industrial heritage tourism is sometimes the only

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<sup>20</sup> Cultural assets application and exhibition and performance facility industries (文化資產應用及展演設施產業). Retrieved April 27, 2021, from

<https://law.moj.gov.tw/ENG/LawClass/LawAll.aspx?pcode=H0170075>

<sup>21</sup> Source: Law and Regulations Database of the Republic of China. Retrieved April 27, 2021, from

<https://law.moj.gov.tw/ENG/LawClass/LawAll.aspx?pcode=H0170075>

possible solution for regenerating industrial areas. In this situation, the economic crisis increases the desire to revive the past (Edwards & i Coit, 1996, 345). However, to build Taiwanese national identity, the importance of heritage tourism lies in shaping the motivation of residents to protect and disseminate local heritage to tourists. Besides, residents with a shared sense of intimacy attach to local heritage and connect their backgrounds and self-identity to a place, which contributes to “tourist gaze” (Urry, 2002, 3).

On the other hand, domestic tourists tend to allude to local heritage in a broader national significance that allows them to share their national identity (Morais, Lee, Hou, Lin, Yarnal & Chick, 2010, 285). As for adopting the concept of Cultural Routes in Taiwan, the Ministry of Culture declared a similar intention of improving the culture industry and enhancing national identity. Thus, adopting Cultural Routes can be viewed as a part of the industrialisation of heritage in Taiwan.

Majdoub (2011, 30-35) advanced our understanding of how Cultural Routes became a new type of heritage industry by examining the debate between Cultural Routes and cultural itineraries. From a spatial approach, thematic routes tie to geographical space via collecting attractions with similar characteristics, which launch Cultural Routes. But the connotation of Cultural Routes also implicitly involves a temporal axis that represents dynamics of movement or the concept of exchange. From the approach of cultural consumption, cultural itineraries satisfy the tourists’ needs of accessing local culture, which is embodied in local heritages and other local attractions. In other words, the experience of place is at the core of the cultural itineraries. From the approach of experience, the growing importance of experiences in tourism led to the advanced skills of consuming places. However, similar strategies of developing cultural itineraries in different areas end up as homogenized places. In this context, Cultural Routes offer a new tool for preserving heritage and creating a more profound sense of place by revealing the value of human mobility and exchange. Therefore, consuming Cultural Routes is, in fact, a way of consuming an experience.

With the notions of cultural itineraries and thematic routes in the Cultural Routes, this heritage concept is adopted to valorise cultural tourism. However, while the development of Cultural Routes inevitably entwines with cultural itineraries within cultural tourism, the way Cultural Routes convey the value of human mobility and connectivity for tourists rather than being consumed as the production of nostalgia is the question that I continuously examine.

## Chapter 2 Localising the ICOMOS Cultural Routes to the Taiwan Cultural Routes

In this chapter, I analyse several published documents, including national administrative plans, reports, and news articles. In section 2.1, I pay particular attention to *The ICOMOS Charter on Cultural Routes*, which is concerned with the first appearance of Cultural Routes. This charter defined the conception of Cultural Routes and elucidated their value. In section 2.2, I will examine the discourse of Cultural Routes in Taiwan through an analyse of the *Administrative Plans* of the Ministry of Culture from 2016 to 2020, and *The Reports of the Workshop on Promoting Taiwan Culture Routes*. These materials reveal the intention of adopting Cultural Routes in Taiwan, providing an example of the localisation of AHD. In section 2.3, the similarities and differences between the two discourses are discussed. I will also argue that both discourses on Cultural Routes have their restrictions. This chapter essentially bridges the gap between the heritage concept of ICOMOS and the economic usage of heritage by the Taiwanese government.

### 2.1 The discourse of the ICOMOS

ICOMOS bespeaks the new concept of Cultural Routes based on the conservation on cultural heritage, underlining the values of revealing the territorial scale and integrating all its elements altogether. This new concept contributes to the idea of common heritages that reach across national borders, and the perspective of viewing heritage as a resource for sustainable development. Below is the definition of Cultural Routes:

*Any route of communication, be it land, water, or some other type, which is physically delimited and is also characterized by having its own specific dynamic and determined purpose, which must fulfil the following conditions:*

- a) *It must arise from and reflect interactive movements of people as well as multi-dimensional, continuous, and reciprocal exchanges of goods, ideas, knowledge and values between peoples, countries, regions or continents over significant periods of time;*
- b) *It must have thereby promoted a cross-fertilization of the affected cultures in space and time, as reflected both in their tangible and intangible heritage;*
- c) *It must have integrated into a dynamic system the historic relations and cultural properties associated with its existence.*

(ICOMOS, 2008)<sup>22</sup>

Following the definition, five keywords were outlined, including “context”, “content”, “cross-cultural

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<sup>22</sup> The ICOMOS Charter on Cultural Routes (2008). Retrieved from [https://www.icomos.org/charters/culturalroutes\\_e.pdf](https://www.icomos.org/charters/culturalroutes_e.pdf)



significance as a whole”, “dynamic character”, and “setting”. The definition and keywords imply the value of communication and mobility, which are the driving force of cross-culture. Cultural Routes are innovations that address linear space, which cross over national boundaries, and connect places through a spatial approach. As the text explains that “its wider scale permits a cultural linking of people, countries, regions, and continents” (p. 4). “Cultural Routes connects and interrelates geography and very diverse heritage properties, forming a unified whole” (p. 5). From a historical perspective, Cultural Routes witness the historical relationship between different cultures. More importantly, a Cultural Route does not just serve as a background to a specific history but rather represents the fluidity and dynamism of history. The text points out that “this vital fluid of culture is manifested not only in material or tangible aspects but also in the spirit and traditions making up the intangible heritage of Cultural Routes” (p. 4).

The category of Cultural Routes evolved under the expanding frame of heritage while intangible values, cultural landscape, and other diverse heritage values were gradually added. Durusoy (2014, 14-16) sorts out the procedure of forming the notion of Cultural Routes. The first valid definition of Cultural Routes was raised after the ICOMOS and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) conference “Route as a part of Cultural Heritage” in 1994. UNESCO outlined the fundamental features of Cultural Routes, which were physical elements, dynamism in the forms of movement, the idea of exchanges between regions, and continuity in space and time. In 2001, ICOMOS added the wholeness of Cultural Routes linking tangible elements to intangible values. With this supplement, the definition of Cultural Route was revised to host many different inputs within its structure in 2003. Finally, *The ICOMOS Charter on Cultural Routes* was published in 2008, which widened the previous definition to the comprehensive version widely applied and cited.

Several routes have been inscribed as Cultural Routes on the World Heritage List. The first one is the Camino de Santiago (Spain to France). Others include the Incense Route desert cities in the Negev (Israel), the Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountains (Japan), the Camino Real de Tierra Adentro (Mexico to the USA), and the Heritage of Mercury Almadén and Idrija (Spain to Slovenia) (ICOMOS, 2013, 5-11)<sup>23</sup>. The exemplary case, Camino de Santiago (Figure 3), was declared the first European Cultural Route of the European Council in 1987 and a site of UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1993 under the category of landscape and historical criteria.

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<sup>23</sup> ICOMOS Cultural routes: new bibliography 2013. Retrieved December 20, 2020, from

<https://www.icomos.org/en/documentation-center/577-cultural-routes-new-bibliography>

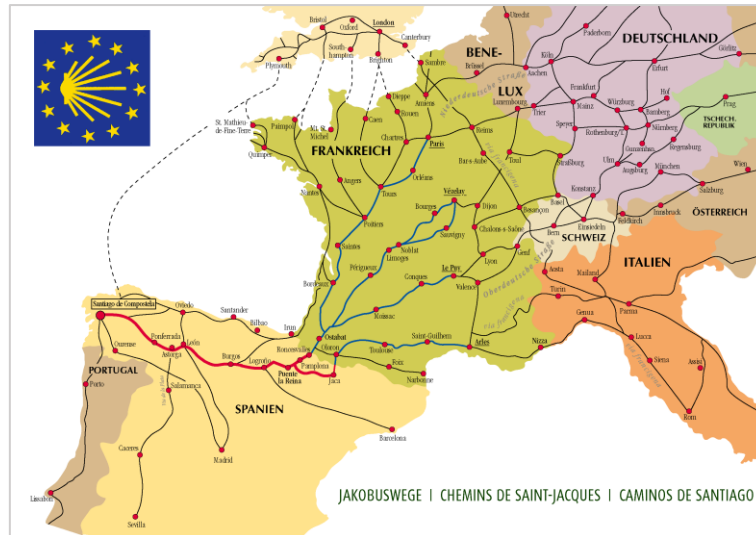


Figure 3 Map of Camino de Santiago (Source:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Camino\\_de\\_Santiago#/media/File:Ways\\_of\\_St.\\_James\\_in\\_Europe.png](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Camino_de_Santiago#/media/File:Ways_of_St._James_in_Europe.png) )

Consequently, the Camino de Santiago was officially listed as “Routes of Santiago de Compostela: Camino Francés and Routes of Northern Spain”. On the UNESCO website<sup>24</sup>, the Santiago de Compostela routes play a crucial role in the two-way exchange of cultural advances, preserving the complete material registry of all Christian pilgrimage routes and bearing outstanding witness to the power of faith among people of all classes. Namely, these routes convey the Outstanding Universal Value<sup>25</sup> of the property that deserves to be protected, which also assumes there are potential threats to it being damaged and to its authenticity. While the Camino de Santiago was registered in the category, it is also claimed to be protected by related measures and by the legislation of heritage conservation. Other Cultural Routes also share a similar logic of being viewed as something that needs protection.

Interestingly, although ICOMOS and UNESCO emphasized the value of linking, communication, and exchange of Cultural Routes, these Cultural Routes’ buffer zones also be valued as they ensure the property’s intactness. For example, the description of Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain on the UNESCO website<sup>26</sup> states that:

*“[...] the three sacred sites with their surroundings demonstrate a high degree of integrity. Also, the pilgrimage routes as part of the extensive cultural landscape, at present retain a significant degree of integrity. Each component part has an adequate buffer zone to ensure the entire property’s wholeness and intactness”.*

As elaborated above, the discourses of ICOMOS and UNESCO on Cultural Routes privilege the grand

<sup>24</sup> UNESCO Routes of Santiago de Compostela: Camino Francés and Routes of Northern Spain. Retrieved April 6, 2021, from <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/669>.

<sup>25</sup> Outstanding Universal Value is the official statement of why a World Heritage property is considered of international importance.

<sup>26</sup> UNESCO Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range Retrieved April 6, 2021, from <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1142/>.

scale and the significant time-depth aspects with the value of mobility and connectivity, which should remain intact. Ironically, the importance of exchanging and linking of different cultures is addressed in the idea of Cultural Routes, but the intactness of place is valued in their managements. The gap between the idea and the management of Cultural Routes is the dilemma of AHD. Lowenthal (2006, 11-12) highlights that the consequence of the AHD within a grand narrative is the need for the material reality that sets many boundaries. Boundaries were drawn by authority to cover the multivocality of heritage and satisfy the assumptions about the innate value of heritage.

This exclusivity of Cultural Routes is also pointed out by Grabow (2010, 101-108). In his opinion, the discourse of Santiago de Compostela Pilgrim Routes develops an inward-looking identity paradigm that constructed a pan-European identity based on the Christian faith. He goes on to say that, while there are some “defensive heritage sites” on the routes that demonstrate the defensive-military and protective notions, it implicitly refers to the negative influences from outside, citing particular that the Muslim civilization is discursively denied access to this “European” heritage (Grabow, 2010, 102). In other words, there are Islamic heritage sites on these routes in Spain but they are excluded. Therefore, it is noteworthy that the significant and shared values of the Cultural Routes that ICOMOS claimed are established on boundaries and exclusivity are politically selected.

The discourse of ICOMOS on Cultural Routes provided a new framework of heritage for reconsidering the values of connectivity and mobility. However, the managements and practices of Cultural Routes have exclusivity and boundaries. In this respect, we have to explore more cases to respond the ideal concept of Cultural Routes. Especially the discourse of ICOMOS became AHD and was adopted by many countries, the localisations of Cultural Routes is important because they can reveal the gap between practices and this concept.

## **2.2 The discourse of the Taiwanese Ministry of Culture**

In the *Administrative Plan 2016-2020*, the Ministry of Culture proposed the policy of Building Taiwan Cultural Routes. Interestingly, Cultural Routes was adopted as a project of the cultural economy rather than heritage conservation. The intentions of this policy were:

- 1. To cooperate with the development of the cultural property, the operation of cultural venues, and the administration of the “smart city project”. Integrate the inter-ministerial development. To build multiple thematic Taiwan Cultural Routes.*
- 2. On the one hand, to use cultural policies to improve the quality, output value, and additional value of the tourism industry; on the other hand, to intensify the operation of cultural venues.*

(The Ministry of Culture, 2015)

In this respect, the notion of Taiwan Cultural Routes was mainly a tool for improving tourism and cultural venues. Furthermore, in the *Administrative Project 2017*, Building Taiwan Cultural Routes was

included in the project of “Internationalising the Taiwan Cultural Brand”, focusing on how to enrich tourist experiences. Then, in the *Administrative Project 2018*, the Taiwan Cultural Routes were connected to the concept of “Local Revitalisation”(地方創生)<sup>27</sup>, which the Japanese Government proposed in 2014. In other words, the Ministry of Culture added the concern of local industry to Taiwan Cultural Routes. As the two excerpts from the *Administrative Project 2018* explain below:

1. *Taking Taiwan history and culture as the central axis with space, story, education, and technology to build the thematic Taiwan Cultural Routes that introduce local culture to the world. Creating an online platform of Cultural Routes to involve citizens with local knowledge and more diverse perspectives, which complete the image of Taiwan.*
2. *Integrate local travel resources and connecting the policies of local revitalization to improve the local economy and cultural tourism.*

(The Ministry of Culture, 2018)

It is evident that the local industries have been addressed since 2018 with a specific focus on local tourism, which has been established in the critical tone of the project of Building Taiwan Cultural Routes. In the *Administrative Project 2020*<sup>28</sup>, the Ministry of Culture repeated similar discourses but adds the concern of promoting crafts and linking different cultural sites.

Regarding the development of the official discourses of the Taiwan Cultural Routes, the notion of ICOMOS Cultural Routes was narrowed as the travel style of in-depth exploration; thematic routes were then aligned to travel itineraries. The adoption of the heritage concept added values to local industries as Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1995, 373) critically argues that “heritage produces the local for export”. One of the roles of the Taiwan Cultural Routes is precisely to “introduce local culture to the world”, more specifically, tourists abroad.

The question then becomes what kinds of local culture are chosen to be promoted and explored. Certainly, if an example of local culture is “valuable” for nationalistic purposes, it is subsequently selected and transformed into “national culture” that Taiwan officials can introduce to the world. The Railway Cultural Routes are an example that symbolise a certain image of Taiwan culture, which will be analysed in Chapter 3. From local culture to national culture, there is a growing evidence that heritage is being used to publicise desirable identities in Taiwan (Morais, Lee, Hou, Lin, Yarnal & Chick, 2010, 279). However, few have considered that the nation is also producing new heritage discourse to align with the international values and international markets that lead to the homogenization of the heritage discourse.

The Taiwanese Ministry of Culture addressed the values of local culture and local knowledge, which endowed Cultural Routes as a positive example of localisation. It is also noteworthy that the Ministry of

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<sup>27</sup> Local Revitalisation(地方創生) refers to a series of policies proposed in 2014 by the Japanese Government in order to ease the decrease of in local population. This concept then was adopted in Taiwan, Korea, and China.

<sup>28</sup> *Administrative Project 2020* (中華民國文化部 109 年度施政計畫). Retrieved April 7,2020, from <https://mocfile.moc.gov.tw/files/202003/1a847a33-cc94-4d27-92b7-27b127516b58.pdf>.

Culture outlined the importance of involving citizens<sup>29</sup> in developing the Taiwan Cultural Routes. This concern is not an exception but embedded in civil society engagement elaborated in Chapter 1. Based on all the efforts contributed by many social actors, the Taiwanese government prescribed this guideline of involving citizens in the decision-making process of building Taiwan Cultural Routes. The question then becomes what local features of Taiwan Cultural Routes demonstrate commendable citizens participation. A helpful starting point is the documentation of workshops in which different social actors participated. I found that the *Report of The Workshops on Promoting Taiwan Cultural Routes*<sup>30</sup> added several perspectives into Building Taiwan Cultural Routes, which will be illustrated below.

Among those perspectives, the connection between ordinary life and Taiwan Cultural Routes is valued. However, everyday life is not a fancy performance for the tourist gaze but various issues that participants desire to solve via Cultural Routes. For example, agriculture was proposed as a topic for Building Cultural Routes to solve the problem of the ageing rural areas. Abandoned spaces were also mentioned to serve as accommodations for visitors of Cultural Routes. Needless to say, these problems are too complicated to be solved by Building Taiwan Cultural Routes. Nevertheless, it shows that participants expect this policy to serve as a problem-solving tool for social issues that responds to a social crisis rather than being an example of cultural conservation. It confirms that cultural heritage is seen as a vital sphere in satisfying social, political, and economic needs of the nation (Peckham, 2003, 1-2).

The tourists' experiences of visiting Taiwan Cultural Routes were also considered by participants. From detailed experiences, such as setting notices on routes to the general experiences about different topics along a route, are carefully regarded. Participants assumed that Building Taiwan Cultural Routes inevitably involved tourists' experiences that were equal to building cultural itineraries. Therefore, "imagined" tourists also play a vital role in constructing the Taiwan Cultural Routes.

Adopting Cultural Routes in Taiwan boils down to two issues: localisation and commodification. The former focuses on bringing in local knowledge and diverse memories to the Taiwan Cultural Routes, while the latter emphasizes using the knowledge and memories as value-added tools to improve the cultural economy and cultural tourism. This is an important distinction. It is essential because we do not want to lose the focus on localisation of this heritage concept while at the same time I am problematizing it. The localisation of Cultural Routes within the globalisation of cultural tourism is, in fact, the practice of "glocalisation".

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<sup>29</sup> The text of the administrative project 2020 contains the intention of involving communities and the public. The text are below: 「建立文化路徑整合網路平台，採由下而上的及民間協力方式，透過專業及民眾參與機制，從多元角度梳理文化路徑主題脈絡。」

<sup>30</sup> The Report of the Workshops on Promoting Taiwan Cultural Routes(推動台灣文化路徑願景工作坊審議結論). Retrieved April 15,2021, from <https://themefile.culture.tw/file/2019-11-29/447ee27c-89b1-40d5-b5ae-fc64a47cdcd6/%E5%84%AA%E6%9C%B5%20%E5%AF%A9%E8%AD%B0%E7%B5%90%E8%AB%96.pdf>

### 2.3 Similarities, differences, and restrictions of the two discourses

I would like to place both discourses of ICOMOS Cultural Routes and Taiwan Cultural Routes into the international heritage discourse, in which the East-West binary has gradually dissolved and turned to the respect of global cultural diversity across and within national states (Akagawa, 2016, 15). However, there are diverse heritage discourses existing, but they are not equal. I argue that there is always a hierarchy among centre-edge international stakeholders when it comes to the heritage discourses. Taiwan being a marginal nation in international affairs due to its suppressed diplomacy, adopts the heritage concept that inevitably serves to align with European values. Hence, the Taiwan Cultural Routes do not redefine and reflect the meaning of Cultural Routes. Instead, they focus on the functions of Cultural Routes. ICOMOS Cultural Routes serve as a guideline, while the Taiwan Cultural Routes act as a tool for appropriating the past according to the ICOMOS guidelines.

An essential difference between ICOMOS Cultural Routes and Taiwan Cultural Routes lies in the function of this concept. ICOMOS suggests that Cultural Routes is a new heritage framework that allows interconnecting practices of heritages to overcome its national boundaries in the continents. Taiwan, as an island, can only establish Cultural Routes within its national borders, which contributes to a constructed nationalism rather than an open mode for imagining the shared values that the Taiwan Cultural Routes could express. The difference for this is due to the geographical restrictions. Although Cultural Routes can also be in the water, it is more difficult to experience them without physical traces and sites, which are thus unprofitable. On the other hand, the closure of Taiwan Cultural Routes is derived from political and diplomatic restrictions. In comparison, the establishment of Taiwan Cultural Routes involves national identity, the complex relationship between Taiwan and China, Taiwan and Japan, it thus limits of cross-nation cooperation.

In addition to the discourses stated in institutional documents, scholars also provided forward reflections regarding Cultural Routes. Before continuing, however, I would like to take James Clifford's concept of "roots/routes" as an anchor, as he proposes an important insight for us to rethink the concept of the Routes.

*"Dwelling was understood to be the local ground of collective life, travel a supplement; roots always precede routes. But what would happen, I began to ask, if we travel were untethered, seen as a complex or pervasive spectrum of human experiences? Practices of displacement might emerge as constitutive of cultural meaning rather than as their simple transfer or extension. Cultural centers, discrete regions and territories, do not exist prior to contacts, but are sustained through them, appropriating and disciplining the restless movements of people and things" (Clifford, 1988, 3).*

Since Routes are cultural practices, their meaning of them is diverse and dynamic within different contexts. For example, among the Kanak of New Caledonia, the concept of Routes is expressed as

“*Chemin*”, which also refers to traceability and creativity. Furthermore, the Kanak always reach an alliance via an exchange, so *Chemin* also implies social relationship (Lin 2016, 37-40). In another case, such as the regions shared by Confucian culture, including Taiwan, the term “Tao”(道) indicates Routes. It also represents the cosmology that conforms to nature and the rules of conduct. The insight of anthropology allows us to see rich and diverse definitions of Routes, which lead us to a broader imagination of Cultural Routes. However, ICOMOS and the Taiwanese Ministry of Culture generally failed to regard different Routes’ descriptions, as the concept of Cultural Routes mainly refers to linear spaces of communication, or as tools for developing landscaped projects based on the endogenous resources of the territories. Both ICOMOS and the Taiwanese Ministry of Culture do not engage in discussion about the relation between Cultural Routes and roots, creativity, and particularly cosmology or other practices that would construct a Route.

Most Cultural Routes, once selected or developed, inevitably face the involvement of tourism. While the discourse of ICOMOS Cultural Routes and Taiwan Cultural Routes both evolve with heritage tourism, any Cultural Routes project will transform these routes, whether the projects are about protection or commodification. Under the tourist gaze, those routes, are at best, infotainment, and, at worst, heritagization. Many authors have identified the influences of tourism on heritage and proposed solutions such as sustainable heritage tourism (see, for instance, Poria& Ashworth 2009; Ciambrone 2012; Kim, Whitford & Arcodia 2019).

Without forgetting the value of community, Huang (2020, 36-37) reflected on the heritagisation of Cultural Routes from a “time geography” perspective and suggested a more inclusive dialogue with the community. The concept of “life path” and “daily path” are adopted to provide tools for theorizing an individual’s experience related to Cultural Routes. This view is important as it bridges the gap between Cultural Routes and individual experiences and memories. With a similar concern about the role of the community of Cultural Routes, Bogacz-Wojtanowska and Góral (2018, 270-272) point out that Cultural Routes are the structurally used heritage management, which differs and changes with time depending on its stakeholders. Considering the durability and development of structures, Beltramo (2013, 21) suggested that establishing a Cultural Route is the act of creating an underlying and continuously reinforced community of people. In other words, building Cultural Routes is also building cultural networks and networks of knowledge.

### Chapter 3 Case study: Taiwan Railway Cultural Routes

*Celebrating the past nowadays stresses the sad and the seedy as well as the seemly. History fumigate[s] experience, making it safe and sterile’.*

(Lowenthal, 2015, 548)

The Taiwanese Ministry of Cultural established Taiwan Cultural Routes with several themes. I choose the Railway Cultural Routes as the case study because of its completeness among the Building Taiwan Cultural Routes projects (Qiu, 2018). Besides, the Taiwan Railway Cultural Routes represent the uniqueness of reusing the colonial past for promoting the present in Taiwan.

This research mainly focuses on the content produced by official institutions, AFRCHO and TECRIJ, that predominated the discourse on Taiwan Cultural Routes. In this chapter, I focus on how officials produce and promote stories, which is quite different from the tone of governmental documents. Rather, these stories are quite touching and innocuous.

In the section 3.1.1, the Alishan Forest Railway is a significant example of cultural policymaking. The railway has long been recognised as a Taiwan feature from the Japanese colonial era and it has been identified as an important part of national cultural landscapes. Therefore, the Alishan Forest Railway also became an essential part of Taiwan Cultural Routes. It is noteworthy that the adoption of Cultural Routes in Taiwan did not bring a revolutionary transformation in cultural policies. Yet, it is a supporting policy that intended to facilitate current heritage practices and industries. Although the term, Taiwan Cultural Routes, was not used in some official contexts, the attitudes of the Taiwanese government toward the Alishan Forest Railway were clear and specific. AFRCHO is the main actor in producing the Alishan Forest Railway discourse. I will examine the film, *The Heart of Alishan Forest Railway*<sup>31</sup>, published in 2020 to shed light on the official narrative targeting domestic citizens.

In the section 3.1.2, *The Railway Routes Section of the Exhibition of Taiwan Cultural Routes*<sup>32</sup> took place from June to July 2020 was a rare promotional event targeting tourists, and to be more precise, the Japanese tourist market. This exhibition was unique as it allows us to discuss how officials promoted Taiwanese identity to “the other”, namely, the Japanese. TECRIJ presented digitalised exhibition, strategically visualising the content of the Taiwan Railway Cultural Routes in the form of texts, images, and a film due to the restrictions of COVID-19 pandemic. The film, *Fascinated/ Fan · Railways*<sup>33</sup>, is an

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<sup>31</sup> 林鐵之心 (*The Heart of Alishan Forest Railway*). Retrieved May 10, 2021, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CZVrf66qQMk&t=1213s>

<sup>32</sup> 【「台湾鉄道写真展」と「心に残る台湾の鉄道切符展」オンライン展示】(Online Exhibition of “The Photography Exhibition of Taiwan Railway” and “The railway ticket exhibition”). Retrieved April 20, 2021, from [https://jp.taiwan.culture.tw/information\\_34\\_111336.html](https://jp.taiwan.culture.tw/information_34_111336.html).

<sup>33</sup> 「Culture Meeting 文活 in 台湾 台湾-文化路徑 鉄道編」: 「迷・鐵道」(Culture Meeting in Taiwan, Taiwan Cultural Routes, Railway Section: *Fascinated/ Fan · Railway*) Retrieved April 24, 2021, from [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6O\\_AylqehKQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6O_AylqehKQ).



important material in this research, as it shows the official narrative targeting Japanese tourists.

Both types of narratives of the Taiwan Railway Cultural Routes are a part of the macroscopic discourses of how Taiwan railways, as colonial heritage, were transformed into Taiwanese identity. I start with an analysis of how AFRCHO and TECRIJ constructed “safe and sterile” stories of Taiwan railway culture. Then, I subsequently use this information to analyse the meaning behind the transformation of colonial heritage to the context of “Taiwanese flavour”, which follows in the next section. In general, the narratives of the Taiwan Railway Cultural Routes successfully recalled the Taiwanese identities but failed to reflect colonized history. Finally, I argue that Taiwan Railway Cultural Routes are not only heritage but also mobility, connectivity and an exhibition of Taiwan.

### **3.1 Promoting Taiwan Railway Cultural Routes**

#### **3.1.1 For domestic citizens: Looking after and defending the Alishan Forestry Railway**

The Ministry of Culture held a workshop to gather ideas for building unique Culture Routes projects for Taiwan in 2018, which primarily focused on four topics<sup>34</sup>, including the Alishan Forest Railway. Minister of Culture, Ms. Cheng<sup>35</sup>, announced a plan for the Ministry of Culture to establish an Alishan Forest Railway Cultural Route Project Office<sup>36</sup> in the city of Chiayi to strengthen relationships with local government and civic groups.

The main line of the Alishan Forest Railway, linking Chiayi(嘉義) to the termination station, Erwanping(二萬平), was completed in 1912 by the Japanese colonial government to exploit abundant forestry resources, and was gradually extended to the Mianyue Line(眠月線) and Chushan Line(祝山線) (Figure 4).

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<sup>34</sup> In the workshop held in 2018, four topics included the North-South Light Rail System supervised by Taiwan Sugar Railways, the Alishan Forest Railway, Taiwan’s Tea Culture, and revitalization of historical sites. Retrieved May 10,2021, from [https://www.moc.gov.tw/en/information\\_196\\_97559.html](https://www.moc.gov.tw/en/information_196_97559.html)

<sup>35</sup> 鄭麗君(Cheng, Lijun) had served as the minister of the Ministry of Culture during 2016-2020.

<sup>36</sup> Minister Zeng announced that Alishan Forest Railway is Taiwan’s first nation-level cultural landscape. Besides, she also mentioned that the Ministry of Culture is planning to establish an Alishan Forest Railway Cultural Route (阿里山林業鐵道文化路徑) project office in Chiayi Cultural and Creative Industries Park further to strengthen cooperation with local government and civic groups. Retrieved May 10, 2021, from [https://www.moc.gov.tw/en/information\\_196\\_100840.html](https://www.moc.gov.tw/en/information_196_100840.html)

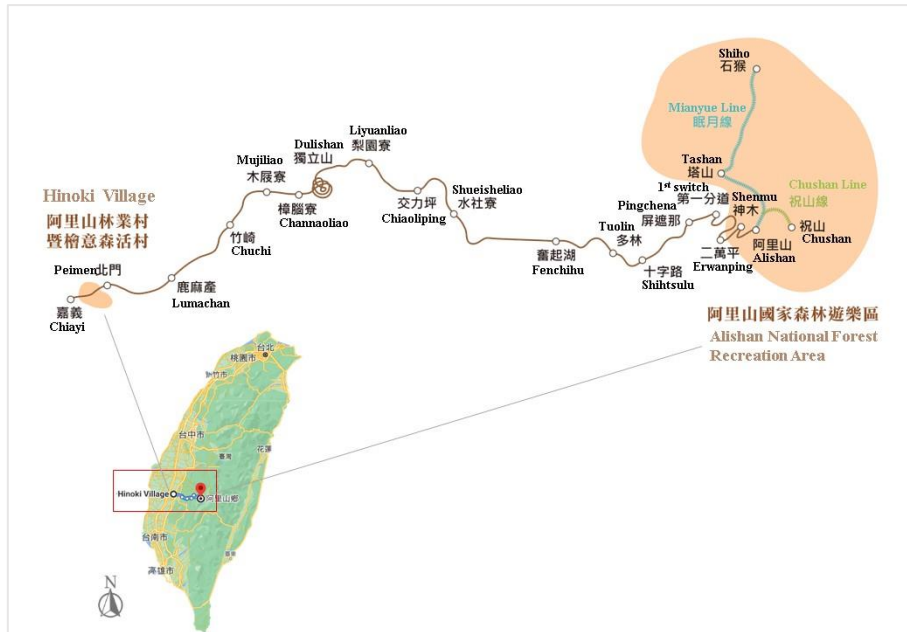


Figure 4 Map of the Alishan Forestry Railway (Source: AFRCHO, edited by the author)

At first, the Japanese used the Alishan Forest Railway to transport timber and started to become a tourist transportation in 1933. It was not fully transformed into a scenic railway until 1963. Nowadays, it is identified as the first nation-level Cultural Landscape, making it one of the Taiwan’s most famous attractions with its extraordinary geographical and natural value. It is not surprising that the Ministry of Culture choose the Alishan Forest Railway as one of the Taiwan Cultural Routes to develop. It had already been identified as important heritage and officially protected and reused for some time. This raised the question of how officials reimagined and repromoted the Alishan Forest Railway for domestic citizens while the route was already a symbol of Taiwan.

One of the main narratives produced for this project, was the film, *The Heart of the Alishan Forestry Railway*. The film tells the story of how staff maintain this shared heritage for the present and the next generation. This film’s main subjects are focused on the personnel who work on these railways, such as the technician, the train driver, and the director of AFRCHO. These workers share their experiences that co-construct a day-to-day narrative of maintaining the Alishan Forest Railway. Rather than telling the stories about how the Japanese government constructed it, this film developed a narrative about the quotidian practices of maintaining the Alishan Forest Railway (Figure5). This perspective is vital as it bridges the gap between Taiwanese and “the production of Japanese colonialism”. In this narrative, the works emphasize that their work relies on lots of experience and “handwork”(手做), which refers to the expertise of maintaining railways in such a harsh mountain environment that is subject to occasional destructive weather such as typhoons. Hence, the inheritance of technology in the maintenance of the railway is influential. In the film, this association with this inheritance of railway technology is nostalgically interpreted as passing on the culture and identity to subsequent generations (Figure 6) and is spliced with scenes of marvellous mountain views, historical footage, and scenes of children playing.



Figure 5 Technicians maintaining the Alishan Forest Railway. (Source: *The Heart of the Alishan Forest Railway*)



Figure 6 The symbolic image of inheritance of railway technology (Source: *The Heart of Alishan Forest Railway*)

“Family” as a key element represents three aspects in this film. First, a station worker, Ms. Wang, states that she is from the Tsou tribe (鄒族)<sup>37</sup> on the Ali mountain. In her case, Alishan is the hometown of her family and many Tsou families.

Second, the train driver, Mr. Tsai, states that he devotes most of his time to work, so he is not a dedicated father and husband. With his wife and kids joining the Alishan Forest Railway family day, he felt his family is closer (Figure 7). This narrative conveys the idea that these workers are not only professionals but also family members just like most ordinary people. On the other hand, it implicitly expresses a more extensive community supporting the Alishan Forest Railway, full of affection for the railways. Even though some audiences might not be interested in the railways, they can still devote themselves to this

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<sup>37</sup> Tsou tribe people mainly distributed in Alishan, which had formed several groups before the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

sympathetic story.



Figure 7 “(The family day) makes family become closer”. (Source: *The Heart of Alishan Forest Railway*)

The director of the AFRCHO, Ms. Huang, states that “She (the Alishan Forest Railway) is our family” (Figure 8). The environment is harsh, and the work is complicated. The staff can only overcome this with a high degree of passion and a sense of mission. Behind this statement, Ms. Huang, defined this “family” as guardians protecting the railway. “She”, refers to the Alishan Forest Railway throughout the film, personifies and feminises the railways, creating a sense of intimacy between audiences and the Alishan Forest Railway.



Figure 8 “She is our family”. (Source: *The Heart of the Alishan Forest Railway*)

### 3.1.2 For Japanese Tourists: Promoting general Taiwan railway’s beauty

*The Railway Routes Section of the Exhibition of Taiwan Cultural Routes* was curated by TECROIJ and held in Tokyo, which was the first action to promote Taiwan Cultural Routes to a foreign country by the Taiwanese government.

There are several reasons for choosing Japan as the target of Taiwan Railway Cultural Routes. First, the number of Japanese visitors in Taiwan has gradually increased in the past ten years reaching over 2 million visitors in 2019, while visitors from mainland China have dramatically decreased since 2015 due to political tensions (Figure 9). Thus, Japan has become an influential target for the tourism industry in Taiwan. Second, there has been a “Japanese Syndrome in Taiwan”(台灣的日本症候群) (Wang, 2010, 35) referring to the complex of Taiwanese showing a more favourable attitude toward Japan because of collective memories of the colonial period. We can find this complex in many Taiwanese pop cultures, such as the films, *Cape No.7*<sup>38</sup>, and *Kano*<sup>39</sup>. Such intimate attitudes toward Japan are quite different from other former Japanese colonies. For example, Korea displays more controversial relation with Japan due to colonial history in Korea (Chen, 2013, 4).

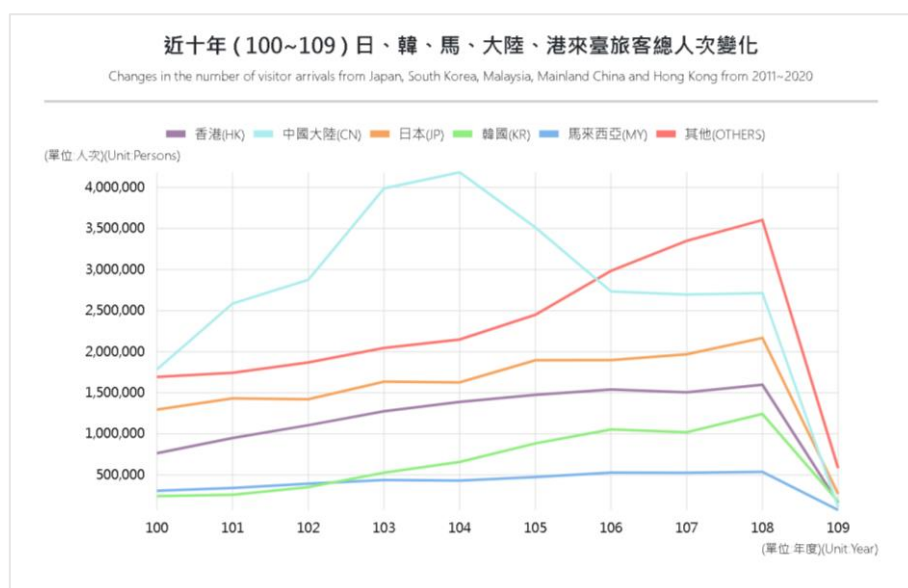


Figure 9.Changes in the number of visitor arrivals in Taiwan (2011-2020). (Source: Tourism Bureau, MOTC<sup>40</sup>)

The main part of the exhibition is dedicated to photography, presenting ten Taiwanese photographers, and the film *Fascinated/ Fan • Railway* about their views of the general Taiwan Railways. Through these ten lenses, the beautiful landscapes and trains become highlights of the exhibition. Within the art study critiques, the “photographer’s gaze” is political, as it involves vantage points, sharpness and depth of focus, colour balance, framing, and other elements of invitations or exclusion of those being photographed (Wells, 2019, 54). Photographers can always choose to insert techniques between themselves and objects, as can social scientists.

<sup>38</sup> 海角七號(Cape No.7) is a 2008 Taiwanese romantic musical drama film, which starts from the romance between a Japanese boy and Taiwanese girl at the end of Japanese colonial period in Taiwan. This romance mirrors with another romance between a Taiwanese boy and a Japanese girl 60 years later. This movie is currently the highest-grossing Taiwanese domestic film.

<sup>39</sup> Kano is a 2014 Taiwanese baseball period film, which tells how a multi-ethnic high school team comprising Taiwanese aboriginals, Han Taiwanese, and Japanese players advanced to a championship game in the tournament.

<sup>40</sup> Tourism Statistics Database of the Taiwan Tourism Bureau. Retrieved April,24,2021, from <https://stat.taiwan.net.tw/>

Nevertheless, the film represents not only these works but also looks at the work from the perspective of who, how, and why these pictures were taken (Figure 10). The film reveals these photographers' stories and views, which creates a space for audiences to share these Taiwanese photographers' gaze. This film can also be interpreted for Japanese to gaze at Taiwanese gazing at Taiwan, while the film's target potentially is Japanese tourists. The ten photographers serve as tour guides that lead audiences to experience Taiwan's landscape and railways (Figure 11). In this respect, the search for having an authentic experience of tourist gaze is replaced by understanding these photographers' attitudes to the railway. While these photographers, who are also railfans who share a pure love of the railway culture, express that they appreciate railways and their hometown, it is touching because this kind of story is sentimental. However, their approaches of narratives towards railway culture lack sufficient reflection and critical thinking of history that leads audiences to a superficial understanding rather than a deeper thinking of Taiwan's railway culture.



Figure 10 One of the photographers of the exhibition in the film (Source: *Fascinated/ Fan • Railway*)



Figure 11. The image of railway with landscape, subtitled “I explore various sceneries in Taiwan to photograph.” (Source: *Fascinated/ Fan • Railway*)

Instead of promoting a certain Cultural Route, the exhibition advertises the general beauty of Taiwan railways, as well as the astonishing landscapes. In this respect, this exhibition is closer to facilitate railway tourism rather than Cultural Route tourism. Although the title of Cultural Routes provides a framework for connecting the history and collective memories with the railways, the content of Taiwan

Railway Cultural Routes is overlooked and unclear. Nevertheless, even without any introduction of resorts or tourist spots, the exhibition is not an advertisement for railway tourism. Yet, it generally portrays nostalgia view of railways, which might indirectly impact railway tourism in Taiwan.

In fact, railway tourism in Taiwan is not a recent thing. The exhibit of *Railways Formosa*<sup>41</sup>(Figure 12) in this exhibition also recalls the history of railway tourism in Taiwan in the Japanese colonial period. We can trace it back to when the Western Trunk Line<sup>42</sup> (縱貫線) was completed in 1908. This prominent construction connected major cities throughout Taiwan, which led to the publication of the first guide book of the Taiwan Railway system, *Railways Formosa*, published by the Ministry of Railway Affairs, Taiwan Governor Office in the same year. This was followed by a series of guidebooks based on Taiwan railways facilitating railway tourism.

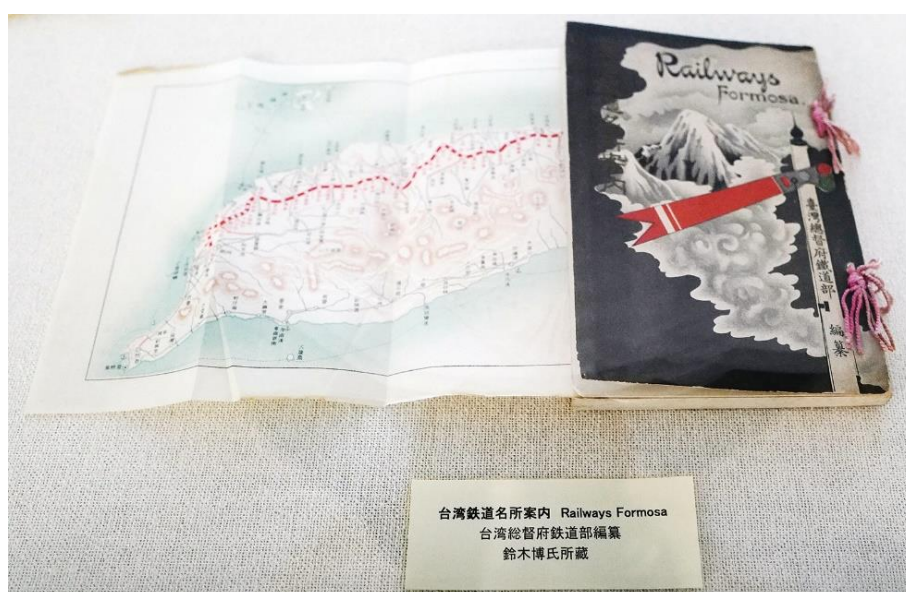


Figure 12 *Railway Formosa* edited by Taiwan Governor Office in the Japanese period. (Source: *The Railway Routes Section of the Exhibition of Taiwan Cultural Routes*)

Before the construction of the railways, travelling in Taiwan was primarily adventures for individuals. It was the construction of the Western Trunk Line that brought the institutionalisation of tourism in Taiwan (Lu, 2020, 192). Chen (2005, 153-154) examined two *Guidebooks of Taiwan Railway Tour*<sup>43</sup>, respectively published in 1927 and 1942, and argued that these books lauded the pleasure of tourist intervention, mobility, and systematic practices in discovering Taiwanese sceneries by train. These guidebooks show that the Japanese government designed the railway to highlight the picturesque.

<sup>41</sup> 台灣鐵道名所案内(*Railways Formosa*) was published by the Ministry of Railway Affair, Taiwan Governor-general's Office, written in Japanese. This book introduces attractions along the North-South Line, which was commonly viewed as the start of the Taiwan tourism industries in the Japanese colonial era.

<sup>42</sup> The Western Trunk Line was completed in 1908 with a route from Keelung to Kaohsiung, which went through all major cities in western Taiwan and remained the main route of the Taiwan railway.

<sup>43</sup> The Ministry of Railway Affair, Taiwan Governor-general's Office published 台灣鐵道旅行案内 (*Guidebooks of Taiwan Railway Tour*), written in Japanese, and elaborated eight routes of railways with near facilities, resorts, and photos of Taiwan sceneries.

Moreover, the appealing pastoral scenes that displays the “tropicality” of Taiwan provided an exotic visual pleasure, especially for Japanese tourists.

In my perspective, the exhibition conveys similar Japanese impression of Taiwan to some extent because it chooses many images of rural scenery, and other elements that exemplify features of tropicality, which strategically catered to potential Japanese tourists. Although both the *Guidebooks of Taiwan Railway Tour* and the exhibition show Taiwan’s tropicality to the Japanese, the former implicitly showed the great achievement of the Japanese colonial government; while the latter, with Taiwanese photographers as subjects, illustrate how the astonishing landscapes with trains are not just exotic objects for tourists to gaze upon. On the contrary, these Taiwanese photographers actively displayed the general beauty of Taiwan Railways with their perspective and memories, although in a way without much depth, as explained earlier in this section. They are declaring that the beauty of the railway is the identity of Taiwan. This shift of transforming Japanese colonial heritage to Taiwanese identity will then be elaborated in the next section.

### 3.2 Transforming Japanese Colonial Heritage to “Taiwanese Flavour”

#### 3.2.1 The nostalgia of railways in Taiwan

The collage-style poster as shown in Figure 13 consists of trains, tea, and peony flowers, with the title of “Taiwan Cultural Routes” and the subtitle “The Railway Section” written in Japanese, representing the blending impression. The images of tea and peony flowers represent pan-Chinese culture, which serves as a promotion for trains in this poster. As for the trains, which are grey and vintage, these create a sense of nostalgia. In fact, nostalgia is one of the main attributes of this exhibition. Since the old railways in Taiwan played an essential role in the growth of Taiwan’s economy, the railway culture is thus linked to the nostalgia for “the good old days”.



Figure 13: The poster of “Exhibition of Taiwan Cultural Routes, The Railway Routes Section” (Source: *The Railway Routes Section of the Exhibition of Taiwan Cultural Routes*)

For the worldwide phenomenon of nostalgia, a representative description is that “the past is a foreign country, people do things differently there” (Hartley, 1953, 9). It precisely expresses how people might



fancy the exotic past. For some people, nostalgic experiences are enjoyable without critical engaging with the past. For others, nostalgia may produce awareness of the insufficiencies of the present and suggest an alternative way for societies (Higson, 2014, 140). These insufficiencies of the present are rooted in “losing culture” in modern times (Berliner & Horsfall, 2020, 5). Although nostalgia might contribute to highlighting the shortcomings of the present, this is problematic since the objective of nostalgia is selected and shaped by the present. As pointed out by the pioneering critique by Lowenthal (2015, 4), nostalgia is dreams about the past in contrast with the unhappy present, which is also nightmares as “the strangeness of the past is domesticated by our own modes of caring for its vestiges” (Lowenthal, 2015, 31). This may demonstrate that nostalgia is not just a longing for the past but, in fact, it reveals the attitudes and standpoints toward a particular past within contemporary societies.

Furthermore, people are not only nostalgic for one’s own past, but enjoy shared histories, referred to as “exonostalgia” — a past not experienced personally (Berliner & Horsfall, 2020, 9). Heritage acts as the agent for people to experience the unexperienced past. In addition, In the case of Taiwan, it is proved that the nostalgia for old railways and the prosperous times represent that the interest by tourists to travel by train and regard railways as a cultural symbol beyond mere transportation (Lee& Chen, 2017, 472).

### 3.2.2 Railway as “Taiwanese flavour” (臺灣味)

In the film, *Fascinated/ Fan · Railways*, a significant statement is that the interaction of railways and people are “Taiwanese flavour” (Figure 14). Taiwanese flavour in this context refers to the Taiwanese spirit or the inexpressible nature of Taiwanese culture. In other words, Taiwanese flavour is a casual way of saying Taiwanese features.



Figure 14. “This is Taiwanese flavour”. (Source: *Fascinated/ Fan · Railway*)

In this case of Taiwan Railway Cultural Routes, the agent of nostalgia is the Japanese colonial heritage, which begs the question of how Taiwanese have come to identify with their Japanese colonial past. Tang and Fujimaki (2018, 28-29) noted two competing attitudes toward Japan in post-war Taiwanese society. On the one hand, there are those who fled to Taiwan in flight from advancing communist forces in

mainland China, many of whom had fought in an anti-imperial war against Japan. On the other hand, Taiwan is made up of those who directly experienced being under the influences of Japanese colonisation, and experience shared by Han Chinese who had long ago settled in the island among the aboriginal people, who had little in common ground with mainlander compatriots. In general, the former group tends to have negative impressions of Japanese, while among the latter group, there is a nostalgia for the remembered vestiges of the colonial period.

Furthermore, Huang (2017, 302) argues that the post-colonial nostalgia in Taiwan results from many problems arising from comparative politics. The comparisons are found not only with the nationalist KMT army who took over Taiwan after 1949 but also to the People's Republic of China (PRC) with its continual threats to invade Taiwan. In comparison to the negative image of the KMT and the PRC, the closeness with Japan has been generated from the identity consciousness of Taiwan. However, without the process of decolonization, the graft of mainland China after 1949 makes Taiwanese reimagine an “advanced” and “modernized” Japan (Chiang, 2013, 45). In this process, some Taiwanese have perceived the fifty-year colonization by Japan as a legacy of modern infrastructure which led to the “civilizing” of Taiwan (Huang, 2017, 302). In this respect, modernity, colonialism, and “Japaneseness” are intertwined. This cognition is so widespread that even the director of AFHCHO also expresses it in *The Heart of Alishan Forest Railway* (Figure 15).



Figure 15 “The advancement of that period (birthed the most extensive national sawmill of the Japanese Empire)”. (Source: *The Heart of the Alishan Forest Railway*)

The modernisation projects in colonial times implied the development of colonial modernity in Taiwan. Among the debates of colonial modernity in East Asia since the 1990s, colonial modernity refers to “a historically driven process of futurist modernity-making under conditions of globalisation colonialism and imperialism” and “a historiographic debate over how to frame what is admitted into histories of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as evidence, how these narratives will be interpreted, and what political conclusions are drawn in relation to our current conjuncture” (Barlow, 2012, 626-627). Taiwanese intellectuals pursued cultural modernity but suffered from the imperialistic oppression at the

same time. The identity construction in the colonial period was complex because it did not simply adopt colonizer's cultural hegemony neither wholly rejected it. Rather, there was an "in-betweenness" with personal and political struggles each having a role in creating new identities (Lin, 2017, 275).

To sum up, the Taiwanese identified with the Japanese colonial government in the process of modernisation. Railways, as one of the significant improvement schemes, also symbolized modernity and development. However, without forgetting these critiques of colonial modernity, the railway was also a fundamentally colonial and modernist project (Barlow, 2012, 627). Transforming Japanese colonial heritage to Taiwanese flavour is a process that involved collective memories. However, what is necessary for collective memory was collective forgetting, which is the process of actively returning to and reevaluating the past anew (Harrison, 2013, 216). The safe and sterile stories of railways are more conducive to Taiwanese, because those stories mainly represent the positive images of the Taiwan Railway Cultural Routes, which are also stories about collective forgetting.

### **3.3 Taiwan Railway Cultural Routes as mobility, connectivity, and exhibition**

ICOMOS Cultural Routes highlight the value of communication and mobility, which are the engine of cross-culture. However, in the case of Taiwan, the importance of mobility was inevitably intertwined with "imperial mobility" (McDonald, 2014, 76). Along with the development of Taiwanese identities, Taiwan Railway Cultural Routes serves as connectivity that brings contemporary Japan and Taiwan closer. The construction of the Taiwan railways also displayed the power of the Japanese colonial regime. The continuous maintenance and practice of Taiwan Cultural Routes is also a way for Taiwan to project "soft power" globally. I will elaborate on these roles of Taiwan Railway Cultural Routes in this section.

#### **3.3.1 Taiwan Railway Cultural Routes as mobility**

Undoubtedly, the railway was a revolution for human mobility. For the individual, spatial mobility constitutes displacement of something across, over and through space. The displacement implies progress, freedom, opportunity, modernity, and speed. For society, spatial mobility is not a neutral contact between a point and a destination. Yet, it is a structuring dimension of social life and social integration (Kellerman, 2012, 3).

McDonald (2014,78) points out that the mobility of the Taiwan railway in the colonial period was intertwined with the discourse of "circulation". Circulation was used to divide civilized from the non-civilized territories and became one of the central claims for Japanese imperialism among East Asia. From the Japanese colonial government's perspective, the island of Taiwan was not civilized due to its topography and remote location. Thus, railways were the solutions. Therefore, the project of constructing Taiwan railways was aimed to increase the circulation of goods and people. With an intensive network of railways, the Japanese colonial era was commonly seen as the period of more mobility, a combination of mobility, circulation, and modernity. Furthermore, the colonial hierarchy remained in the post-colonial societies that dominated the arena of colonial heritage in which the modernised model refers to the theme

of “development” (Chiang, 2013, 143-144). Imperial mobility thus remains the model of development in contemporary Taiwan society.

Transportation and mobility have become a central element of social citizenship that generates social proximity, social trust, and social capital. Corporeal travel relies on traffic and physical proximity, which has no evidence to be replaced by the virtual and imaginative journey. What makes corporeal travel necessary is “co-presence”, which appears obligatory for sustaining social life and dense social networks (Urry, 2002, 265). The Taiwan railways facilitated the mobility of Taiwanese citizenship, as well as Taiwan’s social capital, and serves as the most important transportation method on the island. It also extensively facilitates Taiwan’s social capital and social network. With the collective memories that existed among social network, people endow meanings and nostalgia on railways.

### **3.3.2 Taiwan Railway Cultural Routes as connectivity**

Connectivity of the Taiwan Railway Cultural Routes plays a role in shaping Taiwan as an imagined community in which there existed connectivity between one place and another, between Taiwan and Japan, between generations, such as the image of “railway is our family” that AFRCHO conveyed to the audiences. However, this theme is abstract. Although the aboriginal Tsou people are mentioned in the promotion film of the Alishan Railway Forestry Cultural Routes, ethnic groups are not focal points in Taiwan Railway Cultural Routes. Yet, Taiwan Railway Cultural Routes is a project that actively connects the world, including Japan and the Western world. The connectivity with Japan is a starting point; the connectivity with the rest of the world is the background. As the director of AFRCHO, Ms. Huang, points out in the film, “the Alishan Forestry Railway is not only Taiwanese heritage but also the World Railway Heritage”. This is not just a slogan. The other important parts of the film included the visit of a Slovakian group in 2019, which showed how the Alishan Forest Railways plays a role in diplomacy. Yoshihisa (2011, 52) argues that reconstructing colonial heritage is not telling an old colonial story. Instead, it is a new postcolonial narrative in which Taiwan is imagined as multicultural. However, The Taiwan Railway Cultural Routes tells another story that Taiwan is a member of the global village.

The desire of connecting to the rest of the world generates from the tensions between Taiwan and China. The Sunflower Student Movement<sup>44</sup> in 2014 established the consensus to reject the political pressure in economic means from China. The movement also led to the change of the ruling party. In the term of office of President Tsai, seven nations severed diplomatic relations with Taiwan in 2016-2019. Asserting Taiwanese identities generates the tensions with China, which also increases diplomatic isolation. In this respect, how to improve connections with Japan, Southeast Asia, and the rise of the world became a vital issue.

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<sup>44</sup> The Sunflower Student Movement is associated with a protest driven by a coalition of students and civic groups that against the Cross-Strait Service Trade Agreement by the ruling party KMT at the legislature without clause-by-clause review.

### 3.3.3 Taiwan Railway Cultural Routes as exhibition

The construction of railways in Taiwan was a display of colonial power. Lu (2015, 211-214) illustrates that exhibiting Taiwan, the first colony of Japan, was a way of displaying the strength and power of the Japanese Empire to the world. During the colonial era, Japan shipped Taiwan tea, fruit, and even “civilized” aboriginals for exhibitions. Furthermore, the completion of the Western Trunk Line in 1908 as one the Japan Empire achievements provided an opportunity to exhibit Taiwan to the world. However, the Japanese colonial government faced a dilemma whether to hold an exhibition of Taiwan in Taiwan. Constructing this railway attracted a member of the Japanese Royal family to come to Taiwan for the first time<sup>45</sup>. However, the dilemma emerged from the gap between the “civilized” Taiwan in the exhibition and the “uncivilized” Taiwan outside the exhibition. In other words, the initial way of exhibiting Taiwan via simply representing tea, fruit and aboriginals did not work anymore, while the construction of the Western Trunk Line provides opportunities for visitors to experience the entity Taiwan.

Despite the construction of Taiwan railways displayed colonial power. Nowadays, promoting Taiwan Railway Cultural Routes is displaying soft power. Such a theme of culture is commonly believed as Taiwan’s soft power. The strategies of privileging “culture” as soft power in Taiwan are because the theme of culture is less politically controversial than the story of Taiwan democratization (Rawnsley, 2014, 171). In such a displaying of soft power, the daily practices are brought to the front stage. For example, railway photographers, railway technicians, employees of the government, and other actors who are supposed to be behind the lens became the subjects in the promotion of Taiwan Railway Cultural Routes. Not only do their daily lives satisfy the desire of tourists’ gaze, but also their pleasant perspectives and dedicated work represent the Taiwanese’s soft power.

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<sup>45</sup> In October, 1908, Prince Kan’in Kotohito, representing Emperor Meiji, came to Taiwan to preside over the ceremony of the completion of the Taiwan Western Trunk line.

## Conclusion

Heritage policies in Taiwan have combined tourism with the cultural and creative industries within the development of neo-liberalism. Taiwan officials commonly see heritage as economic resources that can facilitate regional “development”. Heritage tourism especially serves as a driving force of the industrialisation of heritage. Certain types of heritage in Taiwan became a source of entertainment that satisfies the nostalgic feelings of the middle class. Besides, heritage became the nation’s product that helps to shape a certain identity. In such heritage industrialisation, adopting Cultural Routes is also a strategy to improve cultural tourism and to shape the narrative about Taiwan as an imagined community.

The features of cultural itineraries and theme routes within the concept of Cultural Route is highlighted in the policy of Building Taiwan Cultural Routes. However, the ICOMOS Cultural Routes enhanced the value of human connectivity and mobility. This gap between ICOMOS and the Ministry of Culture lies in several differences. First, due to the geographical limitations, and diplomatic restrictions, Taiwan can only establish Cultural Routes within its national boundaries, while ICOMOS suggests that Cultural Routes is a new framework that allows heritages to reach across national borders. Taiwan Cultural Routes contributes to construct nationalism rather than an open mode for exchange of shared value beyond national boundaries. Second, due to the hierarchy among the centre-edge heritage discourse, the adoption of the heritage concept inevitably serves to align with European values. Hence, without redefining and reflecting on the meaning of Cultural Routes, the policy of Building Taiwan Cultural Routes emphasizes the function of Cultural Routes, transforms it into a tool for developing identities, diplomacy, and tourism.

Without forgetting the importance of civic participation in the policy-making process, the Ministry of Cultural invited citizens to discuss the Taiwan version’s Cultural Routes. Generally, citizens look forward to this policy by valuing it as a problem-solving tool. Cultural Routes can not only serve as a framework for heritage preservation or an enhancer of heritage tourism but also a response that contributes to practical issues, such as the ageing society and agriculture dilemmas. Engaging citizens in adopting Cultural Routes is a positive point, contributing to the localisation of Cultural Routes.

In the Taiwan Railway Cultural Routes, the narrative of promoting the Alishan Forest Railway to domestic citizens has shaped Taiwan as an imagined community. Railways have become a “family” in the official story, which creates a sense of intimacy built by close relationships with citizens. On the other hand, the narrative of promoting Taiwan Railway Cultural Routes to Japanese tourists presents the general beauty of the Taiwan railway. Through photographers’ lenses, the astonishing landscapes and the stories of trains generate the nostalgia under their gaze. Furthermore, the nostalgia of railways links explicitly to colonial modernity. It is debatable that railways, as Japanese colonial heritage, have been transformed to the Taiwanese flavour representing Taiwan identities. However, there is insufficiency of reflecting the colonial modernity that Taiwan’s railways convey in both *the Heart of Alishan Forest*

*Railway and The Railway Section of the Exhibition of Cultural Route.*

There are some positive points in promoting Taiwan Railway Cultural Routes. First, the story of maintaining Alishan railways became one of the themes. Rather than focusing on how the Japanese Empire constructing the railway, the everyday works are valued. It provides an ordinary narrative different from the grand history of Cultural Routes. Second, Taiwanese photographers became subjects that became an intermediary of the Japanese tourist gaze. The Taiwanese photographers' gaze is different from the tourist gaze of railway tourism in the colonial time, which generally viewed Taiwan as an exotic place and the Japanese as the colonial power. The inward gaze of Taiwanese photographers toward Taiwan railways displays their identities and pride.

To sum up, the roles of railways have been transformed into the Taiwan Cultural Routes in the present. In the past, railways conveyed the imperial mobility and circulation during the colonial time. Then, the Taiwan Railway Cultural Routes facilitates social proximity, social trust, and social capital of contemporary societies. In this respect, the notion of mobility within the Taiwan Cultural Routes widens the meaning of mobility that ICOMOS values. Second, the Taiwan Railway Cultural Routes plays a role in connectivity. It is noteworthy that although the story of connectivity of railways is "safe and sterile", the Taiwan officials' desire of connecting the world derives from the issue of isolated diplomacy and the increased tensions with China. The value of connectivity that ICOMOS raised generally failed to concern such a connectivity with diplomatic tensions that Taiwan Cultural Routes implied. Third, Taiwan railways were the exhibition of colonial power from the colonial time. Then, the daily practice and pure love in the narrative of the Taiwan Railway Cultural Routes is displayed as Taiwan's soft power in the world. The Taiwan Cultural Routes as an exhibition to show different power to both domestic citizens and foreigners. With this perspective, the other's gaze should also be concern in shaping the Taiwan Cultural Routes.

Previous studies provide diverse examples of practices and management of the Cultural Routes in different countries. In future research on the same topic, other themes of Taiwan Cultural Routes could be used as valuable cases to assess more deeply and comprehensively the localisation of Cultural Routes.

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