

Taiwan living culture

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There is an issue comes up when Taiwan talks about culture conservation, which is the conflict between social development and preservation of military dependents' villages. Taiwan is a place that lived by Holo, Hakka and indigenous peoples. Besides indigenous people, there are many mainlanders who came from mainland China. Those mainlanders came with Kuomintang government for political affairs that happened in China since 1940s. Hence, compare to indigenous people, military dependents' villages, the places mainlanders were living, is actually a minor culture in Taiwan.

Therefore, there are some difficulties for the culture-based workshops when they are trying to protect military dependents' villages. There is lesser population who insist to protect their culture. Moreover, a number of residents were basically moved out from the villages. In this issue, we could study the issue with our cultural communication knowledge, especially identify the culture element that the issue brought by. Refer to the article title, preserving military dependents' villages, the article is discussing about how the workshops trying to preserve military dependents' villages and what are the concerns they are having.

Since military dependents' villages are minority culture in Taiwan, as well as they are not Taiwan's local culture, we can understand how difficult the workshops' tasks are. Hence, preserving military dependents' villages is an issue. This issue was discussed recently. It was being studied since 1990s. We noticed that it was a trend of cultural discussion, which has no certainty beginning and ending. It is generally happened in Taiwan. Those active workshops were operating much in Kaohsiung and New Taipei City. There are some people who involved in this issue.

First of all, there is a workshop called Association of Mainlander Taiwanese (AMT). It is formed in 2004. Yang Tsung-rong is one of board of directors of AMT. He is an Associate Professor at National Taiwan Normal University in Taipei too. He said that the workshop recently focuses on conserving the unique villages. The second involved party is Ministry of National Defense (MND). The land of dependents' villages belongs to MND. There is a law named Act for Rebuilding Old Quarters. It assures MND to have right of demolish the village after the military dependents moved out.

They will rebuild new apartments for military dependents. Sometimes, they sold the apartments in accordance with National Property Act to fund the construction of apartments. The third party is Lin Fung-ching, who is a deputy chief executive of Kaohsiung Military Dependents' Villages Culture Development Association. The workshop was formed in 2007 and operates the Kaohsiung Museum of Military Dependents' Villages. She agreed that less-is-more strategy which means preserving a limited number of the housing areas is sufficient.

She understood the government's concern since preserving all 888 villages is a challenge of local development. Nevertheless, she stated that preserving old buildings in a village is not enough. The fourth person is Wang He-ping, who is another chief executive of the Kaohsiung workshop. He supports the preservation idea and aims to preserve Mingde New Village, Zuoying District as a "living museum" that would see villagers continue to live in the village. Visitors can move into vacant houses to feel their day life culture. He enhanced that preserving the villages is promoting "green belt" concept.

It would add to Kaohsiung's tourism resources. He said that dependents' villages are a minority culture, but they are not a minor part of Taiwan's culture. Wang Ji-xin is the fifth person who involved in this issue. He is a founding board member of the New Taipei City Military Dependents' Villages Culture Association which formed by year 2007. The association is to preserve approximately 60 houses of Sanchong First Village. He is a former resident of the village too. He mentioned that bulldozers will also remove an irretrievable piece of Taiwan's pluralistic culture.

Sanchong First Village's residents had move out and into purpose-built apartment buildings in New Taipei City by 2006. They could only make oral histories instead of make a living museum as Mingde does. Basically, Taiwan is a place that highly appreciates traditional culture. At first, they believed and followed the Chinese culture. Since 1990s, Taiwan started to focus on local culture. They appreciate Holo, Hakka and indigenous groups. Even Ministry of Education introduced the program called "Knowing Taiwan" which focused Taiwan's history, geography and society instead of centered on mainland China.

As the article mentioned, mainlanders who came to Taiwan with Kuomintang government had been allocated in certain places. They thought that staying in Taiwan was temporary plan. However, the dream of "retaking mainland" faded and the mainlanders had to stay in Taiwan. According to government's arrangement in 1980s, 90% of 110, 000 households recorded in 1984, the dependents of mainlanders, who were military's families, have left the villages. Nevertheless, some workshops tried to request to preserve the villages for culture conservation.

At last, we found that the workshops perform so well which fight for their culture yet do not ignore the social development. What we learnt in communication and culture, we have no problem to agree that living lifestyle is one of culture definition's elements. There is a set of pattern preserved and shared human activities among a social group from generations to generations. In this article, the dependents' villages are recognized culture of what we learnt in class. The military dependents' villages were brought by mainlanders from mainland of China.

They brought their families to Taiwan as well. Hence, they started practice their normal life in Taiwan generations by generations. Moreover, there are pictures of their culture proof. For the first page, we can see a big house built at Mingde New Village in Kaohsiung. It is for higher-ranking officers. The second page has 5 photos. The top one is the narrow alleys in the military dependents' village. The photo below it shows the mandarin words which means "Be calm amid confusion". It would be probably the residents' value oriented.

The other two photos that wrote mandarin words, "One year to get ready, two years to recapture, three years to clean up and five years to finish the job". The military has the purpose on recapture the mainland of China when they came to Taiwan. On the following page, there is a photo of some apartments. They are the new apartment buildings for military families such as these in Kaohsiung's Zuoying District. We noticed that the villages' culture had been gone. The other photo in this page shows the military dependents villages' cultural festival in New Taipei City.

The fifth page showed the military uniforms and identity cards at the Kaohsiung Museum of military dependents' villages. The last page showed the selection of dishes at a Kaohsiung military dependents villages' foodfestival in 2011 and a well-preserved living room at Sanchong First Village in New Taipei City. All of them are significant culture. This issue is quite similar to Malaysia's not to demolish Jalan Sultan case. We noticed that culture preservation is important, especially the historical buildings. We understand social development is important too yet there are some ways to avoid from demolishing cultural buildings.

As the photo we saw in fourth page, the original outlook and environment was gone after the rebuilding. It will be happened in Jalan Sultan if we do not fight for the preservation of culture. It is sad if we lost our significant culture on our land. Therefore, we should appreciate our culture and think the other ways to avoid from demolishing our significant culture. For example, Melaka had preserved those culture buildings and items. They then become elements of tourism and improving our national incomes. Hence, we should think twice before we made the cruel decision of demolishing some precious and valuable cultures.