

history of the Ainu largely in isolation from their relations with the Japanese state.” However, the emphasis on separateness also serves a purpose, namely, to prevent the Ainu from meeting the same fate as Okinawa: to be co-opted as the “cradle of Japanese culture.” At the same time, using the word *Shisam* allows Honda to assert the equal coexistence of different groups of inhabitants of Japan, among them Ryūkyūan Japanese, Korean Japanese, Ainu Japanese and *Shisam* Japanese (15), thereby challenging, above all, the superiority of the *Shisam*.

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DELL'ORTO, ALESSANDRO. *Place and Spirit in Taiwan: Tudi Gong in the Stories, Strategies and Memories of Everyday Life*. London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2002. xix + 300 pages. Tables, maps, photographs, glossary, bibliography, index. Hardcover £55.00; ISBN 07 0071 5681.

In *Place and Spirit in Taiwan*, Alessandro Dell'Orto attempts to contribute towards an anthropology of place from the perspective of Tudi Gong in Taiwan. Tudi Gong is the most basic Chinese god of locality. He is characterized by his multilocation. That is, he can be seen almost anywhere on the island of Taiwan—in homes, shops, restaurants, urban neighborhoods, rural villages, or even in cemeteries. He is watching over and protecting soil and people

within the boundary of which he takes charge. He is also characterized by his multilocution. Each place he guards has its stories to tell and so the cult of this most ancient and popular Chinese deity lives on in the narratives of the people and places of contemporary Taiwan. The author assumes that the multifacetedness of Tudi Gong is coming from the differential, multiple, and contrasting senses of place, community, and identity that people experience and imagine in the practice of everyday life.

Alessandro Dell'Orto, in his introduction, points out the validity of attending to "place" from the following points of view. First, he sets out his perspective that an analysis of people's senses of place coupled with a study of Tudi Gong cults and temples in specific communities can be an appropriate medium for exploring Taiwan's radical and rapid transformation over the last few decades, and people's strategic adaptation to these changes. Secondly, place is, in his view, best ethnographically described and theoretically analyzed as a confluence of voices which, through people's and anthropologists' stories, strategies and memories of everyday life are variously and continuously spoken. He has a strong confidence that an anthropologist can no longer write his monograph with a detached attitude. It must be questioned if, he stresses, people's and anthropologists' senses of place merge in the ethnographic process and final product. Putting emphasis on the ethnographic process, the author not only tries to reduce the distance between culture as it is known during fieldwork and culture as it is portrayed in a written account, but also invites the reader to experience the same immediacy and freshness as the author did in listening to stories of people, places, and Tudi Gong.

Actually, his descriptive style concerning the two main sites where he conducted his fieldwork—one in the big city of Taipei and the other in the rural district of Nantou County—is very unique and inventive. In order to familiarize readers with the process by which the author established close rapport with people and became acquainted with the conditions of these field sites, he retraces the walking routes of his first field inquiries in Chapters 1 and 2. Readers are able to relive the author's fresh encounter with people in the field sites and the interaction between them. Insofar as the initial logging of information goes, both the ethnographer and readers can share a sense of the same immediacy and freshness the ethnographer felt when he came across people, places, and Tudi Gongs. Besides this, based on the comparison of the style of ethnographic writing between Chapter 1 (on Datong district in Taipei) and Chapter 2 (on Yongxing village in Nantou County), the author explores how the place and cultures ethnographers study may shape and dictate the tenor of their writings. The author stresses that the extent to which the place and cultures precondition ethnographic writing has not yet been coherently discussed in anthropological literature.

In Chapter 4, readers can understand Tudi Gong's various positions, functions, and connotations as imagined and experienced in the Taiwanese practices of everyday life. In Chapter 5, in presenting various types of textual and oral materials on Tudi Gong, such as anecdotes, proverbs, Tudi Gong games, songs, and so on, the author indicates that local popular knowledge of Tudi Gong is becoming an ongoing and creative arena of meanings and interpretations by which the Taiwanese explain his functions, connotations, and their attachment towards him.

In the final chapter containing theoretical discussion, the author explores the relationship between Tudi Gong and the notions associated with place. His contestation can be summarized as follows:

1. The author stresses that a Tudi Gong temple offers place as locale, that is, an active generator of meaning and practice.
2. Tudi Gong's presentation as guardian of people and place, as recorder of events occurring among individuals and communities he protects, and as controller of the ghosts indicates those connotations are associated with the notion of territory.

3. The positioning of Tudi Gong temples and their ritual activity are examples of the way the temporal/historical attributes of localities can endure, notwithstanding social, political, and economic changes.
4. Given the flux and mobility of modern life, Tudi Gong temples express, in the senses of place of the author's raconteurs, a desire for fixed reference points. In his view, they are illustrative of the Chinese locative view.
5. The various functions and connotations that people ascribe to Tudi Gong, the representations and stories they tell about him, and the localized histories inscribed in the place where his temples are sited constitute senses of place.
6. People in Taiwan seem to relate Tudi Gong temples, the localized practices, and representations associated with Tudi Gong with the place through which they can create or recreate a sense of community and identity.

This may be the first book, as far as I know, in which textual, oral, physical, and audio-visual materials of Tudi Gong are delineated exhaustively and with great care. It may be also exceptional in that it focuses discussion mainly on Tudi Gong in an anthropological study. In my view, however, the author's research objective and the actual way in which he deals with the materials are not so congruent.

The author, for example, stresses places are important because they create meaning, which is explored by seeing how people integrate the particularities of place into their local folklore and their shared history of a locality. However, when he exemplifies his assumption, he seems to rely more on preceding case studies or Chinese philosophical concepts than on the original materials he collected in his field sites. He also accentuates that the people's and anthropologist's senses of place must merge in the ethnographic process and final product. That means, as he says, an anthropologist "should not 'write about them,' but rather write an account with them which would, as much as possible, let their 'voices' become merged with my [the anthropologist's] own." However, it is a pity that readers can hardly catch the voices of inhabitants in Datong and Yongxing except those he recorded in his initial journey. Because we can only gain scanty information or images about Tudi Gongs in those two sites, many questions seem to arise. For instance, how do people in Datong district (or in Yongxing village) narrate their experiences of magical power of Tudi Gong? How do they combine magical power of Tudi Gong with Tudi Gong's connotation and function in their religious cosmology or in their specific local situation?

It is worth stressing that Alessandro Dell'Orto's ethnography is very stimulating because it is, as far as I know, the first work in which Taiwanese folk religion is analyzed not from the "religious sphere," the conventional key concept to analyze territoriality of popular religion, but from the viewpoint of "place." It seems necessary, however, for an anthropologist not only to conduct the journey-type of field research he describes in Chapters 1 and 2, but also to settle himself/herself in a field site for a certain period and extract voices of inhabitants by conducting solid fieldwork. If the author had succeeded in collecting similar kind of stories and materials in the very fields as those cited in Chapters 4 and 5, and had made them objects of analysis, his discussion and conclusion may have been more eloquent.

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