



Leisure, Work, and Constituted Everydayness Mountain Songs of Hakka Women in Colonized Northern Taiwan (1930–1955)

In his creative critique of industrial society and everydayness, Henri Lefebvre points out the contradiction and interdependence between leisure and work. Taking the narratives of Hakka women in northern Taiwan speaking about their personal experiences of singing or listening to mountain songs (*san²⁴go²⁴*, *shan²ge*) as an illustrative example, this article reveals multiple relations between leisure and work, acting as a theoretical compliment and extension of Lefebvre's theory. Through a focus on personal narratives, the approach taken in this article enables us to examine and record certain forms of everydayness in the rural lives of Hakka women in Taiwan in the period between 1930 and 1955. This article explores the experiences of Hakka women being colonized through a discussion of life-history narratives in reference to listening to and singing mountain songs within the daily and extraordinary contexts of life within the local community. The article presents several findings, including how mountain songs acted both as social markers in colonial society and as channels to obscure the boundary between leisure and work.

KEYWORDS: mountain songs—everydayness—gender—northern Taiwan—Hakka

THE HAKKA have been an important minority in Taiwan since the Ming and Qing dynasties. As noted by Myron Cohen, “Persons speaking various dialects of ‘Southern Fukienese’ (*Min-nan* or *Hokkien*) have always constituted the majority of Taiwan’s Chinese population. Speakers of Hakka (K’echia; pinyin *Kejia*) became an important minority only after immigrants from Kwangtung (Pinyin: Guangdong) Province began coming to Taiwan in the seventeenth century” (COHEN 1976, 3). While Hakkinese may be the minority in Taiwan as a whole, Hakka-speaking Chinese make up the vast majority in Miaoli County.

Traditional Hakka plays and mountain songs in northern Taiwan are based on the “four counties” (*xi⁵⁵ ien⁵⁵, sixian* 四縣)¹ dialect, which is also the dominant dialect in Miaoli (HUANG and CHUNG et al. 1983b, 18–33). This explains the pervasiveness of mountain songs in Miaoli, and constitutes the main reason Miaoli was chosen as the focus for my research on Hakka mountain songs and women’s life stories.

Let’s sing mountain songs together till people harvest early rice on the New Year.

If you hear someone singing mountain songs, you can join in to sing until the birthday of the goddess Mazu and the celebration of the New Year.

When picking tea, you pick the fresh leaves.

If you do not pick tea for three days, the leaves get old.

If girls do not see their lovers, they become dispirited.

When guavas are ripe, the tree will blossom again.

Girls are not the heads of their family this year.

In two years, fortune will return to girls.

They wish to be loved by lovers.

Girls’ lovers are handsome looking, just like the woods in a remote mountain.

One rotten block may be chopped into seven or eight pieces.

Girls are not supposed to be with their lovers.

Boys cannot go uphill, thus sit on the hillside and sing mountain songs.

People say boys are licentious, but boys can do nothing in life.

(Lyrics sung by Grandma Huang of Gongguan [1936–])

Scholars consider mountain songs (*san²⁴go²⁴, shan²ye* 山歌) to be one of three categories of Chinese folk songs, and this category also includes a wide variety

of genres, such as *hua'er* (花兒) in Qinghai and Gansu, *shanqu* (山曲) in Shanxi, and *feige* (飛歌) among the Miao in Eastern Guizhou (ZHANG and SCHAFFRATH 1991, 23–24).² *Shan'ge* are defined as “songs mostly in free rhythm, sung outdoors and performed in a loud manner” (ZHANG and SCHAFFRATH 1991, 23). Mountain songs in northern Taiwan, especially “old mountain songs” (*Loi*³¹ *San*²⁴ *Go*²⁴, *Lao Shan'ge* 老山歌, described below), were composed of four lines, with each line containing seven characters. Topics and lyrics were impromptu. Although the literati of the Qing dynasty and the Japanese colonial government looked upon traditional Hakka mountain songs unfavorably, and some regulations even sought to forbid such performances, historical records and newspaper articles published during the Japanese occupation indicate obvious zeal and enthusiasm for these performances among Hakka communities (CHENG 2001, 48–50).

Through the discussion of life-history narratives in reference to listening to and singing mountain songs within the daily and extraordinary context of daily life in the local community, this article explores the experiences of Hakka women in northern Taiwan of being colonized. The period explored traverses the Japanese occupation and the period immediately following World War II. By focusing on narratives, this article takes a unique approach that allows for a more nuanced ethnographic description and a deeper exploration of the subtle diversity among individual experiences. The latter in particular is something that is often lacking in folk song studies. Personal narratives not only relay unique personal perspectives but also tell us about the collective experiences of rural Hakka villagers during a specific time and space.

This study will demonstrate that the relationship between women's life stories and mountain songs goes beyond a simple description of their emotional experiences. There is a certain indexicality that exemplifies deeper emotions. For this reason, exploring the connection between the story of an “object” and the life history of “people” (HOSKINS 1998) is a fruitful approach towards studying the relation between Hakka women and mountain songs. Thus, this article is situated at the intersection of three different areas of literature: gender and expressive culture, Hakka studies, and ethnomusicological studies of Hakka music.

GENDER AND EXPRESSIVE CULTURE

The feminist anthropologist Henrietta MOORE's (1994, 8–27) critiques of ethnographic and feminist studies have reminded us that, although ethnographic studies that focus on recording the experiences of women have been common since Bronislaw Malinowski and Margaret Mead, the main emphasis has been on the narration, analysis, and explanation of the thinking of women from the male point of view, leaving women's own “voices” unheard. That is, previous anthropological writings that focus on women have neglected the subjective experiences of women themselves. In Moore's opinion, this is the reason post-feminist researchers have tended to emphasize the subjective viewpoints of women in contrast to earlier studies. However, works that focus on women's experiences and expressive culture continue to be relevant to post-feminist literature, especially in discussions of song.

For example, Abu-Lughod argues that the oral lyrics of *ghinnawa* (little songs) are an important ethno-poetic device to demonstrate the complexity of Bedouin culture. This is because it is only in song that women and young men can express the personal and intimate feelings “that violate the moral code, sentiments that they themselves denied in their ordinary language interactions in less intimate social situations” (ABU-LUGHOD 1986, xvii). Similarly, SEREMETAKIS (1990) describes the relations between Maniat women’s self and social and cosmological orders, which can only be understood through the antiphonic performance of lament: poetic improvisation, prose monologues, ritual sobbing, screaming, and iconographies of the body.

In regards to women’s expressive culture in Chinese contexts, marriage laments among those living in the Nanhui region in the lower Yangzi delta, rural Hakka-speaking women, and Cantonese-speaking women in Guangdong and Hong Kong, are a peculiar and primary ethno-poetic device for a bride to express what she is not permitted to express in normal situations (BLAKE 1978; HASE 1990; HO 2005; JOHNSON 1988; McLAREN 2008; WATSON 1996). In line with Abu-Lughod’s theory, WATSON (1996, 127) suggests that “the Cantonese bride frames her words in ritual and song, thus saving herself from the condemnation that would surely follow if the same sentiments of betrayal, loss, and fear were expressed in ordinary speech.” HO also emphasizes that the oblique use of words and the display of verbal artistry are a bride’s strategy “to make inexpressible messages expressible” (2005, 79).

Regarding the present research, BLAKE’s (1978), HASE’s (1990), and JOHNSON’s (1988) works are especially relevant, given that they have written about laments and folk songs among Hakka villagers in Hong Kong. BLAKE’s (1978) work suggests a concept of “the licensed expression of the bride” in reference to the lament that provides the form for the bride to express her feelings freely. Similar to the communicative feature of the marriage lament, the genre of mountain song is also a form used to express romantic and erotic feelings, of which the open expression is forbidden in traditional Hakka villages. HASE’s (1990) work discusses the significance of mountain songs for Hakka villagers in Hong Kong. Hase explains that the expressive culture of mountain songs is associated with young men and women approaching marriageable age and that, “anything too direct would have been regarded as ill-mannered, and most mountain songs are allusive and metaphorical” (HASE 1990, 22). In other words, both the performance and the lyrics of lament in mountain songs have the power to reveal information about gender relations and culture.

The present study geographically extends previous research to discuss a case from northern Taiwan. However, instead of placing emphasis on lyrics, performance, and emotions, this article focuses on the diversity of individual experiences of singing and listening to mountain songs among Hakka women.

HAKKA STUDIES

Is the gender role of Hakka women unique? This has long been a major issue of debate in Hakka studies. As noted by Nicole Constable of Hakka women, “their reputation for independence, diligence and making important economic

contributions to their household” (CONSTABLE 1996, 25–28) stands out in comparison with the women of surrounding communities. A comparative look at several contemporary ethnographies demonstrates wide variation among the social roles of Hakka women and in those roles’ relations to work and identity. For example, Ellen Oxfield found that in Calcutta, Hakka women who belong to wealthier families are less likely to directly participate in the daily operation of the family firm (OXFELD 1993; 1996). However, according to Sharon Carstens, in the 1970s, Hakka women in Pulai commonly participated in agricultural work because they were thought to have particularly “strong backs” and “strong wills” (CARSTENS 2005). Such variation tells us that gender in Hakka communities is not essential but contextualized. That is why Constable points out that “the connections among Hakka identity, class mobility, and gender roles deserve further research” (CONSTABLE 1996, 28). This article takes Hakka gender roles and the relations between work and women in Hakka society as its core issues, and these will be described and discussed through exploration of biographic accounts made by Hakka women about their lives between 1930 and 1955 in rural northern Taiwan.

With regard to the issue of gender cultures of Hakka societies, there is room for more research to expand on women’s voices by exploring their unheard viewpoints as individuals and as members of patrilineal families and communities. In this direction, some recent research conducted by three young female scholars in southern China and Taiwan has sought to highlight Hakka women’s narration of their own experiences. These include XU (2006), who discusses how women in Hakka villages in eastern Guangdong Province break through the traditional limits of gender roles by participating in the singing of Cantonese Hakka women’s mountain songs and worshipping events. Xu argues that women exert their agency and autonomy by listening to and singing mountain songs or by participating in worship or initiating pilgrimages to temples. LI (2001) describes work experiences narrated by Hakka women villagers in Miaoli County in reference to stereotypes of Hakka women as being especially thrifty, diligent, and obedient. Similar to Constable’s question and argument about the unique gender role of Hakka women, Li’s study also raises questions about the positive contribution of women’s work and social status to their families. In contrast to XU (2006)’s and LI (2001)’s informants, who live in rural countries, YU Ting-chiao (2004) describes and discusses the experiences of Hakka female cultural workers—all of who are well educated immigrants, from rural villages to Taipei—and their transformation of ethnic identity from alienation to cultivation. By utilizing the narrations of Hakka women in Miaoli, this article is a contribution to the above ethnographies’ discussions of features of Hakka individuals and communities, which highlight the voices and subjective experiences of women.

ETHNOMUSICOLOGICAL STUDIES ON HAKKA MUSIC

Mountain songs themselves have become a common subject of ethnomusicological inquiry for what they can tell us about the historical diversity of Hakka populations (LU 1999). Most Hakka immigrants in northern Taiwan

were from Jiaying, Haifeng, and Lufeng in eastern Guangdong Province, having migrated during the seventeenth century. The genres of mountain songs were brought to Taiwan by these Hakka-speaking Chinese immigrants. Due to the variance in waves of immigration from their homelands in South China, Hakka mountain songs in northern Taiwan differ from those heard in southern Taiwan.

There are three different genres of mountain songs in northern Taiwan (LU 1999). First, the oldest folk songs in the north are named for their tune *la, do, mi* instead of their content. Each song is composed of four lines, with each line containing seven characters. The topics and lyrics of the “old mountain songs” are impromptu instead of prescribed. (They were originally performed in the fields.) Second, the performance of another genre, “tea-picking tunes” (*Piang¹ Bang¹*, *Pingban* 平板, or *Ca³ Ca¹ Tiau⁵*, *Caichadiao* 採茶調) were also originally performed in the fields but are now commonly heard in villages and in theaters.³ In this genre, the tune *sol, la, do, re, mi* differs from “old mountain songs,” but the songs maintain the same structure of four lines, each line containing seven characters. “Tea-picking tunes” are also sung in an impromptu manner. Third, the “little ditties” (*Sew³ Tiau⁵*, *Xiaodiao* 小調) is also a genre of Hakka folk song. However, in this genre, the title, rhythm, and lyrics are fixed, with no improvisation (LU 1999, 169–78). Most interviewees spoke of the “old mountain songs” and the “tea-picking tunes,” which were impromptu and originally performed in the field. Some of the interviewees sang mountain songs for us. The lyrics sung by Grandma Huang were particularly vivid, as seen in the introductory stanza.

Investigations into Hakka communities by ethnomusicologists tend to focus on material culture or art when discussing the content of the genre, and the development and change in Hakka traditional music and mountain songs (CHENG 1999a; 1999b; 2001; HSIEH 1997; HUANG Hsin-ying 1998; SU 1999; YANG 2004; 2005). Their studies not only highlight the insights of the songs themselves, but also demonstrate how they reveal the relations between the genre and the immigration histories of Hakka people. One important contribution to this literature is the work of Cheng Jung-hsing. When discussing the history of the Taiwanese “Hakka comedy of three actors” (*Sam²⁵ Giog² Ca³ Ca¹ H⁵*, *Sanjiao Caichaxi* 三腳採茶戲), Cheng quotes the Qing literati, HUANG Chi-hsien (1839):

Tea dramas are also called Three Actor Troupe [*Sam²⁴ Giog² Ban²⁴*, *Sanjiao-ban* 三腳班]. Introduced from eastern Guangdong, the farcical act is performed by two actresses and one actor with a painted face, singing songs of a bawdy nature. Sometimes performances were held every day and night in the villages. Such performances have become popular recently in Yuanzhou and Zhangsha in China. People are easily attracted to the performances. (CHENG 2001, 60–61)

Taking a historical approach to the “Hakka comedy of three actors,” Cheng cites works from “men of letters” in Taiwan and Guangdong during the Qing dynasty and the beginning of the Republic of China, as well as records from the Japanese occupation. Cheng concludes that there have been two different attitudes towards this performance under the different historical contexts of the Qing

dynasty, the Japanese occupation, and the days following World War II. On the one hand, the local community demonstrated obvious zeal and enthusiasm for these genres; on the other, the literati spoke of the same performances very negatively (CHENG 2001, 48–50). Such a contradiction in attitude toward Hakka mountain songs is important for our understanding of the social context of the relations between folklore and folklife (BAUMAN 1977; BAUMAN and BRIGGS 1990; BEN-AMOS 1971; 1972; 1998). This contradiction is also important for understanding the elder Hakka women's narrations explored here regarding mountain songs in the period between 1930 and 1955 in rural northern Taiwan.

Finally, Cheng's analysis is all the more accentuated by his family background and identity as a knowledgeable insider and expert in the professional "Hakka comedy of three actors" performance circle. However, even in CHENG's work (2001), the Hakka's subjective experience is seldom mentioned. In current studies on Hakka mountain songs, the audience, the communities, and the experience or feelings of a listener and/or singer are seldom referenced. According to HOSKINS (1998), the object of a life history is not a fixed text, and not all narratives can be discovered easily. When people talk about their lives, they do not talk only about themselves; they also try to display how they look at themselves in a particular way at the moment they are telling their stories. In other words, people use objects and stories as media to express selfhood. In this article, a similar method was used to collect elder Hakka women's personal narratives through in-depth interviews as they talked about their life stories in reference to singing and listening to mountain songs. Furthermore, looking for nuanced ethnographic information and diverse individual experiences in the narratives of singing and listening to mountain songs during an earlier historical context, this article may also present a contribution to the extent literature on Chinese folk songs in general (ZHOU 1996; JIANG 1982; HAN 1989) and other regional mountain song traditions in particular (ZHANG and SCHAFFRATH 1991; SCHIMMELPENNINCK 1997; YANG 1994).

HAKKA GRANDMOTHERS IN MIAOLI AFTER THE JAPANESE OCCUPATION

Interviews were conducted by the author with the assistance of Chiu Chia-hsin, the author's research assistant and a native Hakka speaker. All interviews were conducted entirely in the Hakka language and the four interviewees highlighted here were all near or distant relatives of Chiu. Our interviewees were all raised in Hakka villages in Miaoli, where they lived through times of colonization and war. All lived in areas that were densely populated by speakers of the "four counties" dialect of Hakka (HUANG and CHUNG et. al 1983b, 18–33). The four women whose narratives are explored here came from varied educational backgrounds. In Tongxiao, we interviewed Grandma Liu and Grandma Lo. Grandma Liu was the oldest of the four and had received no education at all, while Grandma Lo was the youngest and the only interviewee who had received a complete education in Mandarin Chinese. In Gongguan, we spoke with Grandma Teng and Grandma Huang. Both received some education but never completed elementary

school; for Grandma Teng, her education was mainly under the Japanese regime. As demonstrated below, the difference in terms of levels of education, family background, and living conditions contributed to the variation in their understanding and feeling towards the singing of, and listening to, mountain songs.

Regardless of educational opportunities, all four women spent portions of their youth helping in the fields. At that time in Miaoli, this would mean picking tea or raising silkworms. In addition, all were expected to do household chores after doing agricultural work.

Grandma Liu was born in Wumei Village, Tongxiao Township, Miaoli County, in 1927. She had four siblings, two sisters and two brothers. Her natal family made a living as tenant farmers. Based on the recommendation of a matchmaker, she was married at the age of twenty into a family in the same village with the surname Wu. She had three sons, the first born when she was twenty-one. Her husband also made a living by farming. Her everyday activities included cooking, preparing sweet potatoes, feeding pigs, working in the vegetable gardens, collecting firewood and hay, grinding rice, and taking calves to graze. On rainy days, she would be busy making straw rope (*da³¹ vo¹¹ gon³¹ sog²*, *dahegansuo* 打禾稗索). In other words, her daily life was characterized by nonstop work.

Grandma Teng was born in 1932 in Fuxing Village, Gongguan Township, Miaoli County. Her father ran a brick business and was also the village head (*baozheng* 保正). Japanese police officers often came to their house to chat. Some of them even stayed for a long time in her home. Compared with Grandma Liu, Grandma Teng was brought up in a wealthy family. As a teenager, she went to see movies and took a bus with her friends to downtown Dahu and Miaoli to seek entertainment. At the age of eighteen, she would walk the long distance to a factory in Miaoli in order to work and learn tailoring with the intention of making clothes for her neighbors. At the age of nineteen, against her father's wishes, she married a man three years younger than herself and from a poor family. In 1974, she took a managerial position in a porcelain factory, where she continued to work for more than ten years. She later quit because of the excessive workload.

Grandma Huang of Gongguan was born in 1936 in Shuili Township, Nantou County. Both of her parents were Hokkien. After her parents died during her early childhood, Grandma Huang moved to live with her paternal aunt (her father's sister) and her aunt's husband in a Hakka community at Gongguan. This experience made her identify as Hakka, both culturally and linguistically. From then on, in addition to agricultural work, she also picked vegetables for pigs and raised silkworms. At the age of eighteen, based on the recommendation of a matchmaker, she married a local boy who she had known since her childhood. They raised three daughters and six sons, mainly with the income earned from her husband's job of selling medicine to villagers. After she married, she did not continue to raise silkworms but continued to work on the farm. She planted lemongrass to make lemongrass oil and soaps for sale.⁴

Grandma Lo was born in 1939 in Shuangtan Village, Sanyi Township, Miaoli County. Her maternal aunt and grandmother raised her because her mother died when she was three years old. At the age of eight, she moved to Tongluo Town-

ship. Immediately after graduating from elementary school, she started to work on the family farm. She sometimes helped to pick tea at her paternal aunt's tea farm. After she married, she only had time to help her husband's family. Life was busy, especially during the sixth lunar month, the busiest month of the year. During that month, she had to prepare breakfast, bring baskets of refreshments to the fields, and prepare lunch for a dozen or so field workers who helped to reap rice. She then had to bring laundry to the village dam to be washed, pick vegetables, and prepare food for the chickens. After bringing the empty basket of refreshments back from the field, it was time to prepare dinner.

The common theme in each of the four elderly women's life histories is one of incessant work. Although these women had similar modes of life, mountain songs carried different meanings for each. During the interviews, due to the consanguineal or affinal relations with the interviewer and interviewees, these women were able to share their life experiences regarding mountain songs in a personalized manner (ABU-LUGHOD 1986; SEREMETAKIS 1990).

WOMEN'S NARRATIVES

Grandma Liu of Tongxiao (1927–)

Grandma Liu was the oldest among the four women interviewed for this research. She was seventy-nine years old at the time of the interview, which was conducted in her home at Wumeikeng. She is the interviewer's paternal great-grand aunt (FFBYE), and was accompanied by the interviewer's paternal grand aunt (FFBYE).⁵

[In the past] I lived in Wumei.... This place was just so big then, but there were only two police officers around *Bed⁸ si⁵⁵ vo²⁺* [*Beishiwō* 北勢窩], *Pung²⁺su⁵⁵vo²⁺* [*Fengshuwo* 楓樹窩], and *Vu²⁺ mi¹¹ hang²⁺* [*Wumeikeng* 烏眉坑].... About the folk songs, whether people were older than thirty or teenagers, [a person] who came from a poor family with a lot of family members under the same roof, and worked all their lives or take oxen to graze for other people, would be more likely to sing mountain songs. Children would definitely utter *yi-yi-o-o* [laughter].... I have lived here for sixty years [laughter].... When I married here, your grandfather was a teenager, but I never heard him sing a mountain song [laughter].

There were Hakka tea-picking comedies, plays, temple performances, and acts during Taoist rituals.... But these drama performers were invited by villagers ... not by the government officials.... On the birthdays of deities, villagers were willing to contribute money to organize performances in order to increase the popularity of the place. But actually most of the money was from the wealthy. Poor people did not have extra money for recreation.... At that time children's favorite activity was watching drama. Hawkers would sell sweets to children near the stage under a canopy.

At that time, actors performed drama for deities, same as nowadays.... There were also hawkers selling medicine. After singing "tea-picking tunes," they would start shouting to the audience for business: "Come here to buy medicine

if you need it.” Those who needed it would approach. The medicine hawkers did not just come on drama days, but sweets hawkers only came to sell to children on those days.... The medicine hawkers also would call in the evening. If they planned to come, they would advertise in the morning first. When people heard the news, they passed it on to others, and people would know about it. Those who wanted to watch would attend that night.... The location was usually on the square before the temple.... About forty years ago, even this kind of advertisement appealed to crowds of people [laughter].

When people sang, we listened and smiled. This would make us work harder. Because if you did not work hard, the boss would not hire you.... Those who picked tea could indeed sing the best mountain songs, but now they are rare.... There were no tea plantations around the place (Wumeikeng) in the past! But we did not go to other places [meaning beyond the tea plantations]. Today a lot of tea pickers can sing well, but most live in the north ... that is, the Toufen area where there are a lot of tea plantations, and Nanzhuang, Xinzhu.

Grandma Teng of Gongguan (1932–)

Grandma Teng’s father was a village head during the Japanese occupation. She is also the interviewer’s maternal grand aunt (MFZY). Surrounded by the interviewer’s maternal grandmother, Grandma Teng⁶ recalled the days of mountain songs in Fuxing Village, Gongguan Township:

In the past, I could hear only my grandmother sing mountain songs. Who else in the family could sing mountain songs? My grandmother would sing for a while even when they were tying grass knots [laughter]. But I did not inherit such a gift from her. My grandmother seemed to sing folk songs well, but I did not learn any.

I could really sing well at first, and some of my daughters could sing well, too. After giving birth to two children, I still could sing well, until the time when life became so difficult. I had to find a job, and I was usually not in a good mood. I forgot every song at the time A-hsiung [her son] failed in his business. I was in no mood to sing.... Recently there were people teaching how to sing mountain songs in the activity center.... Or there were people singing on television. No one in the family can sing now.

Grandma Huang of Gongguan (1936–)

Accompanied by the interviewer’s paternal aunt (her father’s sister) and mother, Grandma Huang, whose parents were both Hokkien but who grew up in a Hakka village in Miaoli, told us her stories about mountain songs under Japanese rule and through the post-World War II era in Chukuangkeng village, Gongguan:

When I was nine years old, I lived there [*Cud² kong⁵ hang²⁴ Chukuangkeng* 出礦坑]. After I arrived ... working in the fields, cutting weeds for oxen, growing vegetables ... all were my responsibility. Life was difficult.... My husband was born here. I got married early.... Talking about “old mountain songs,” people all over the mountain area could sing without instrumental accompaniment. If

we went picking vegetables for pigs and heard people on the opposite mountain singing mountain songs, we would learn from them. When I was still a girl, I would learn from someone in the opposite field singing mountain songs that sounded good. After I learned the songs, I sang when I cooked. When I finished with my work, I sang the mountain songs.... When I was young I also hummed the songs at home, too.

Before I got married, I had heard people singing mountain songs. In the past, I had to pick chestnut leaves in the mountain to feed the pigs ... and raised silkworms.... After I married, I did not do those things but worked in the fields. We used to plant lemongrass and thus had to cut, pick, and dry it under the sun. On a rainy day, we had to rush out to collect the lemongrass lest it become wet.... At that time, I knew some of the singers of the mountain songs. When people sang a song to us, we sang back. We could sing various tunes, such as *San²⁴ Go²⁴ Zi²¹* (*Shan'gezi* 山歌子).... We learned from those who sang in the mountains ... and every time when I went to work in the mountains, I sang with those singers over on the other side.

My natal family was Hokkien. Until I was nine years old, I could not speak Hakka or do what they do in a Hakka family.... In the past, lots of girls like me could sing mountain songs, some of who married into faraway places. If we did not live far away from one another after we married, we would definitely sing mountain songs together when we went collecting firewood or doing something else.

Now I am old, and I have taken singing lessons for six to seven years. I sing in the class.... I already had an interest in singing mountain songs before. Now I am old and have finally started to go to the lessons offered in our community. I go there when I have leisure time. If I do not have time, I will not go. The elders tend to have less interest in it.

Grandma Lo of Tongxiao (1939–)

The youngest of the four women, Grandma Lo, is the interviewer's paternal grandmother (FM), and was the only one who received a complete Mandarin-language education. She first heard mountain songs in the tea fields when she helped her aunt pick tea at the age of thirteen or fourteen. She said:

[I grew up in] Shuangtan Village of Sanyi Township.... There, people spoke Hakka in the Four Counties dialect.... I lived with my maternal grandmother.... When I was four or five years-old, there were air raids and sirens that came from the post near the sugar company in Miaoli, where the Miaoli District Court is now. Because of the air raids, your grandfather [interviewer's great grandfather]⁷ and I came to live here in Gongguan. Later we went to live with my eldest paternal uncle's [narrator's father's eldest brother] place near the watchtower.

[In Sanyi] there were tea fields and lemongrass gardens.... Lemongrass was used to make oil. Lots of vendors collected the oil in the old days. The product, like what we apply on the skin when bitten by mosquitoes nowadays, was made of lemongrass.... No one in my family sang mountain songs. People in the past

were conservative.... In the past, we had to weed the lemongrass garden. People planted lemongrass everywhere in the mountain. After the lemongrass was picked, workers stood in a line to weed. Some weeded from one direction, others from the opposite direction. There were four to five workers, but sometimes five to six, all of them young girls. Those who could sing mountain songs would sing.

Some people who were drunk would sing mountain songs, too. Some played a string instrument. They would sing under the roof, without the need for a stage. There was no electric organ then. Some people joined them without being invited. They were accepted like friends. As long as you could sing or play a string instrument, you could participate regardless of your lineage or family group in the village. Later, when someone got married or celebrated birthdays, there would be activities like this. This continued for about thirty years. Some people sang mountain songs in the open.... Others would sing on a bus when they were travelling.

It was forbidden to sing songs in a place where there were tablets of deities.... People sang more often when picking tea.... When we worked, we sang freely together. Sometimes the young men sang and the young women sang back. The life of picking tea was free as well as joyful.

Singing mountain songs ... also helped. If you could sing well, you sang as if you were exhorting people, telling them how to behave themselves. Some exhortatory essays were like these, weren't they? Some songs asked people to practice filial piety.... Like this, if I did something wrong, it would be described in the mountain songs. It was good for us. After we listened to the songs, we felt better and our spirits were high. It was one way of amusing ourselves.... If you just sit there, you will think about a lot of things and feel bad. If you have someone to sing to or joke with, you could forget bad things and stop worrying about them.

How could I have time to worry about anything? I married into Tongxiao when I was eighteen years old. Being a daughter-in-law was busy enough. At the age of nineteen, I had already given birth to a son, your father. How could I have time to sing mountain songs? I had to cook, work fast, and return home as soon as possible.... Though I still listened to their songs, I could not sit there and listen all the time. After listening for a while, I had to go back to cook or do other things.

SINGING AND LISTENING TO MOUNTAIN SONGS

Based on the above narrations, the following sections discuss how these women described their interest in, understanding of, and views on Hakka mountain songs in their own words. The above narrations focus not just on mountain songs but also extend to descriptions of personal emotions as well as interpersonal relationships in the communities within the context of Japanese colonization. These episodes were meaningful in their minds, fleetingly interweaving past and present, places and people, turning seemingly mundane experiences into significant "memories." When talking about mountain songs, the people involved came to their minds first. Grandma Liu thought of her husband who could not sing mountain songs. Grandma Teng mentioned her grandmother and father who would sing once in

a while. Grandma Lo referred to her conservative family in which no one sang at all. Then, they thought about the “places” where mountain songs were sung, such as in performances, while picking vegetables for pigs or picking tea, while cutting lemongrass, while hawkers were selling medicine, or in the activity center where mountain songs are now taught. Such a connection is in line with Walter Benjamin’s theory of “dialectical image” (HIGHMORE 2002a, 93 and 106). In other words, there are double meanings to be conveyed in these Hakka women’s personal narratives. On the one hand, personal memory may be affected by both experiences and interactions between the past and the present. Through their narrations, various images continued to affect these Hakka women, and the results were connected to their understanding and annotation about the past, present, and future. On the other hand, their personal experiences may not be limited to one particular time or space, resulting in a broader view on a subject that had allowed them to break away from the daily triviality of life in the past. Therefore, our illustration and elaboration on the narrations have gone beyond personal roles and life encounters to a presentation of a specific version of collective memory. In this regard, the following section analyzes the main episodes of their memories regarding mountain songs. These experiences, marked in particular time and space in their own way, were reconfigurations of work, everydayness, and leisure, which also enable us to examine, record, and reframe the relations among colonialism, women’s expressive culture, and Hakka women’s rural lives in 1930–1955 Taiwan.

Mountain Songs Differentiating Leisure from Work, and Ritual from the Everyday

First, through Grandma Lo’s narration, singing or listening to mountain songs played a significant role in rituals, particularly during birthday banquets thirty years ago. It was also the best pastime at night in an agricultural society. People sang and played instruments in open spaces, such as under porch roofs or in front of temples, making everyday life joyous. Mountain songs were not only important in rituals, but also in everyday life.

Second, mountain songs were extremely informal (in Grandma Lo’s words, they were not regarded seriously), and had their confined position in the community. It was forbidden and deemed “improper” to sing at places with tablets of deities, such as inside temples or shrines. As the songs were meant to be heard beyond the mountains, they were also forbidden in the house, because they were considered to be an annoyance to elders. Singing mountain songs or watching tea dramas were regarded as activities for “people who like to play around,” and conservative and well-mannered people, especially women, would not engage in such activities.

However, for Grandma Lo, mountain songs also expressed longing and other emotions, more like singing from the heart; singing as well as listening to mountain songs was a means to get rid of feelings of depression and raise her spirits. When working in the mountains she could enjoy the songs because her companions would sing together. They sang while cutting lemongrass and picking tea, infusing leisure into work. In the postwar era, Grandma Lo also recalled that she had many chances to hear mountain songs on television and when she travelled by bus.

In Grandma Lo's mind, "work" was a part of "life." Life was simply composed of different types of work. For her, it was improper to sing mountain songs when participating in agricultural work, cooking, or doing household chores, because these were stressful jobs and took up most of her daily life. Under such circumstances, she did not have much control. Mountain songs seemed to be widely sung in Grandma Lo's narratives, and even acted as a "marker" for special occasions. For example, mountain songs were sung during birthday banquets and at restaurants but were prohibited at places of worship or when elders were present. For Grandma Lo, to determine the seriousness of different occasions, the presence or absence of mountain songs became an "effective tool" to distinguish one type of occasion from another.

The Obscured Boundary Between Leisure and Work

Grandma Huang regarded singing mountain songs as wonderful experiences that "exist everywhere, like air." Since the melodies were widely accepted, mountain songs could be learned easily and sung during different activities. Learning to sing mountain songs was relaxing and easy and became part of her daily life.

According to Grandma Huang, people would mostly sing when working in the hills, while picking vegetables for pigs, or when picking mulberry leaves for silkworms. When someone sang on the opposite mountain, she could learn the song. She could sing with an acquaintance or a stranger. She also sang when she went to collect firewood. She once sang with her husband before she was married to him. For her, music was life. It was everywhere. Singing mountain songs was not limited in place or time and carried no taboos. In this way, mountain songs did not differentiate leisure from work. They were an integral part of everyday life.

Mountain Songs as "Unimportant" in Daily Life

From Grandma Teng's narratives, the meanings of mountain songs can be grouped into two. First, singing was a private activity instead of a public one. She considered singing in public to be improper. Second, singing mountain songs and being an educated person were incompatible. To Grandma Teng, the activity was "improper" and "unnecessary" and thus unimportant in her daily life. This attitude contrasts with the attitude of Grandma Huang, who blended folk songs with leisure and work. Grandma Teng's life experience and background were different from the other grandmothers. During the Japanese occupation period, she owned a radio at home, so she could listen to songs every morning, and during this period there were exclusively Japanese songs. She was influenced by Japanese culture, because of her father's position; for example, she wore Japanese-style clothes. Thus, even with her wartime memories and after the end of Japanese colonial rule, her attitude towards Japanese culture was positive, indicating that her lifestyle maintained two cultural elements.

The Atmosphere of Mountain Songs, Banter, and Joy

Finally, Grandma Liu mentioned that most of the people who liked to sing mountain songs were less educated and usually had many siblings living together. They would sing while they were taking oxen to graze or while doing manual labor. According to Grandma Liu, the tea pickers were the best singers. In general, mountain songs connect leisure with work. When people work, they sing to amuse themselves and others. As she remembered, those who sold medicine would also sing in order to attract customers. Generally speaking, mountain songs for her meant that those who could sing, would sing, and those who could not, could listen. During work, mountain songs provided entertainment.

Leisure and Work

The above biographical narratives of elderly women have formed the basis for reclaiming the everydayness, colonialism, and women's expressive culture and social life during the period from 1930 through 1955. Are there any particularly dialectical relations among leisure, work, and everyday life from these women's accounts and experiences? Can such relations present the locality of the Hakka community in Miaoli? This article is in line with previous work on leisure, work, and everyday life (DE CERTEAU 1984; HIGHMORE 2002a; 2002b; LEFEBVRE 1991; 2002).

Leisure, work, and everyday life in industrial society are related in a complicated way: they are one while opposite to one another, and thus their relation is dialectical. Also, leisure and work cannot be distinguished temporally between weekdays and the weekend—that is, the same person experiences both, and the content of the leisure does not alter this fact. Leisure and work should be understood as one. For an individual, work and leisure constitute a distribution of work and non-work throughout time. Henri Lefebvre proposes a dialectical discourse in order to understand the relation between work and leisure. In his opinion, work hard and you can have leisure activities, and the purpose of leisure (whether to amuse or to distract) is to escape from work. Leisure seems to be the “non-everyday” in daily life, but does not actually provide an escape from it. Leisure can still be relative to work. In other words, leisure is still embedded within everyday life. People who engage in leisure activities do not escape the alienation of industrial society (LEFEBVRE 1991, 29–42).

In this regard, everydayness refers to all activities, including conflicts and differences between activities. However, some ambiguities—such as festivals and carnivals—exist in between. A festival is part of popular everyday life, but it is also a radical reconfiguration of daily life “that is anything but ‘everyday’” (HIGHMORE 2002a, 122). Moreover, a carnival is “a moment when everyday life is reconfigured, but this different order of things is present in everyday life itself” (HIGHMORE 2002a, 123). The above discussion is in reference to capitalist industrial societies, a context that differs from the agricultural society of 1930–1955 colonial northern Taiwan. Despite significant social, cultural, and historical differences, Lefebvre's concept of reconfiguring daily life in a festival or a carnival can contribute to our

understanding of the singing of or listening to mountain songs as a reaction to everydayness. This reconfiguration may not be as extreme as the words “festival” or “carnival” suggest but may be regarded as a similar switch between work and play, between the mundane and extraordinary. In line with the dialectic between work and leisure, the narratives of the elderly women show that mountain songs and daily life were closely connected and structured as a chain.

Lefebvre’s critique on everyday life and on the relation between leisure and work gives insights to reframe Hakka women’s experiences of leisure and work during Japanese colonization and through the postwar era. In the following, I will discuss the features of leisure and work that have been revealed in the accounts given by these elderly rural Hakka women.

While in some contexts singing mountain songs blended with working, in other contexts there was a separation between leisure and work.

Work, instead of being opposite to leisure, was also an occasion for singing mountain songs. This viewpoint is especially obvious in Grandma Huang’s narratives:

[P]eople would mostly sing when working in the hills, such as when picking vegetables for pigs or picking mulberry leaves for silkworms. When someone sang on the opposite side of the mountain, we could learn the songs. We could also sing with an acquaintance or a stranger.

(Grandma Huang of Gongguan [1936–])

Grandma Lo also had similar experiences. Although singing mountain songs could happen in different places, it mostly occurred in the mountains and was spontaneous in nature. They would most likely sing when companions worked together. Grandma Liu, the oldest among the women interviewed, did not relate mountain songs to work directly, but she demonstrated the subtle relation between them. Having lived under Japanese rule for the longest period, she suggested that to sing Japanese songs, you had to be completely “free” (*ban*¹¹, *xian* 閒) and separate from work. But to sing mountain songs, there was no boundary between leisure and work.

At that time only those who had time to idle around could sing the Japanese songs; but mountain songs were for everyone, with or without education. People, like us, could sing it by remembering how others sang. They sang while they were working.... They sang to amuse themselves.... Those who could sing would sing to others, mainly for fun. Thus, the sun would set quickly.⁸

(Grandma Liu of Tongxiao [1927–])

Grandma Liu also mentioned her singing at work and she smiled when others sang. Her narrative seemed to suggest that the amusing characteristics of the songs helped them to work harder, encouraging the work. The act of singing while working could be connected to the literature on work songs, such as SCHIMMELPENNICK’s (1997) work on mountain songs in southern Jiangsu province, which describes landlords hiring groups of singers to participate in work in the fields to motivate other workers and increase production.

In their reminiscences, singing and listening to mountain songs happened most when they picked tea. Grandma Lo described the scene vividly:

To pick tea, we needed only one hand, with a basket on our backs, wearing a bamboo hat and a handkerchief wrapped around our heads. We picked good quality tea with three sprouts or one sprout rounded with two leaves. We did not put the leaves into the basket until our hands were full. We could work really fast.

(Grandma Lo of Tongxiao [1939–])

Although their hands were working busily, at the same time they were singing “freely” (*han¹¹ han¹¹*, *xianxian* 閒閒). Everyday life was not only meant for work but also to have fun.

We sang together freely. Sometimes the young men sang and the young women sang back. The life of picking tea was free. (Grandma Lo of Tongxiao [1939–])

These elderly women’s narratives closely related mountain songs to tea picking, which had something to do with the community where the narrators lived. LI (2001), YU (2004), and LIEN (2006) have noted that Hakka women were especially devoted to their families and worked diligently in the house and in the fields. Regarding the relationship between tea planting and mountain songs this article confirms their assessment.

As Grandma Lo said, “[Where did] I first hear mountain songs? It was at my aunt’s place in Dahu. When I picked tea, I heard someone sing. It was a ‘tea song.’” This comment indicates that there was a possible connection between mountain songs and tea picking, but what exactly? HSU (1991) mentions that Hakka folk songs in northern Taiwan are typically called “mountain songs,” “tea-picking songs” and “songs with lyrics of mutual praise.” Hakka dramas in rural Taiwan are generally called “tea-picking dramas” or “plays.” To understand the relationship between mountain songs and picking tea in Miaoli, we interviewed six informants in Touwu and Shitan. All of them had been involved in the tea industry when they were young. Some were teashop owners and others were employees at tea factories. As one elder, Uncle Chang in Touwu, remembered, “I could hear mountain songs in the tea fields or tea factory in the early days. Some people sang to each other in the fields, the others sang to themselves late at night.” Another elder, Grandpa Chiang (1933–) in Touwu, who had worked in Xinhechang Tea Factory⁹ after the war for more than two decades, said: “Mountain songs were rarely sung around the tea fields in Touwu Township. If some people could really sing, they must be ten years older than me and live near the mountains.”¹⁰ Grandma Hsieh¹¹ in Touwu (1934–) described:

Mountain songs were rarely sung in the tea fields except in the large ones with large groups of tea pickers, such as in the inland area of Shitan. They also went to other places, such as Guanxi, Xinzhu, Longtan, and Taoyuan to help people to pick tea. Here in Touwu, those who could sing were over eighty years old. People of our generation rarely sing.

Grandpa Chang from Touwu expressed a positive attitude towards singing mountain songs, whether it was in the fields or in the factories. But Grandpa Chiang and Grandma Hsieh from Touwu, who had worked for many years in the factory, related mountain songs to the older generation or to the “inland” areas such as Shitan, a distinction that implied a geographical/altitudinal stratification. The descriptions gleaned from these three elders about the tea fields in Touwu and about the situation of working in Xinhechang Tea Factory were different, and each responded to Grandma Lo and Grandma Huang’s narratives in their own ways.

The mountain songs were sung in the tea fields. The relationship between mountain songs and picking tea in the fields was not only expressed in the lyrics, but also rose out of the social context of work, in which people sang freely and echoed what was sung by others to amuse themselves. This idea is reflected in these lines sung by Grandma Huang:

When picking tea, you pick the fresh leaves.
 If you do not pick tea for three days, the leaves get old.
 If girls do not see their lovers, they become dispirited.

The content and variation in the lyrics were a means of personal communication and emotional expression. The singing and labor were connected by the impromptu and freely-circulating nature of the mountain songs at the place of work.

While in some contexts singing mountain songs blended with working, in other contexts there was a separation between leisure and work. For example, in the performance contexts mentioned, including birthday banquets, temple festivals, and so on, mountains songs were sung in those contexts that did not fall under the category of “work,” but were experienced as a form of “leisure.” Similarly, there is the comment by Uncle Chang that “[s]ome people sang to each other in the fields, the others sang to themselves at night.” We may suppose that the singing at night, while not occurring during work, could have also served as a form of leisure.

Additionally, as Grandma Lo depicted, she had to play the role of daughter-in-law and mother, working under a tight schedule. For some of these women, singing or listening to mountain songs was a luxury. Her experience contrasts with the discourse that states the place of picking tea was also the place of singing songs:

(But) how could I have time to worry about anything? I married into Tongxiao when I was eighteen years old. Being a daughter-in-law was busy enough. At the age of nineteen, I had already given birth to a son, your father. How could I have time to sing mountain songs? I had to cook, work fast, and return home as soon as possible.... Though I still listened to their songs, I could not sit there and listen all the time. After listening for a while, I had to go back to cook or do other things. (Grandma Lo of Tongxiao [1939–])

Grandma Lo’s narrative appears to indicate that she felt too busy with work to find time to sing. The contrast between her experience and others who found singing and work to be complementary seems to reflect different conditions, such as women’s post-marital status and parenthood. Additionally, Grandma Lo’s narrative

can be seen as parallel to the excerpt of Grandma Hsieh's narrative, which seems to suggest that only certain tea fields had singing, but her suggestion that only older singers sang in her area also indicates a generational change as well. These different narratives reflect varied conditions in different geographical regions and some combination of changes in society. Therefore, we may also relate this to SCHIMMELPENNINCK's (1997) book on mountain songs in southern Jiangsu, where she describes group singing in the rice fields during earlier times, but also notes that later workers did not sing, due in part to social change.

Another factor is that mountain songs defined as leisure were closely related to the expression of feelings and the dialectic (or entangled) relations of erotica and morality.

Through the narrations of these elderly women about the dynamic of work and leisure we also see references to feelings, erotica, and morality. For example, Grandma Lo describes how the singing of young men and young women was associated with feelings of freedom (*han¹¹ han¹¹*) when they were picking tea. The feeling of release from their busy lives (*mo¹¹ han¹¹*, *wuhsien* 無閒) was one of the important themes expressed by every Hakka elder women we interviewed. It is in this context that the theme of freedom in Grandma Lo's narratives can be understood: "We sang together freely.... The life of picking tea was free." Such joyful feelings of freedom and release were also expressed literally in the lyrics sung by Grandma Huang:

Let's sing mountain songs together till people harvest early rice in the New Year.
If you hear someone singing mountain songs, you can join in to sing until the
birthday of the goddess Mazu and the celebration of the New Year.

However, there was also negativity when they mentioned "mountain songs":

Those who watch rituals in the temple are good guys; those who watch plays are bad; and those who watch tea-picking plays are immoral [*kon⁵⁵ zai²⁺ g^{ua}i²⁺ kanzhaiguai* 看齋乖, *kon⁵⁵ hi⁵⁵ yai²⁺ kanxiwai* 看戲歪, *kon⁵⁵ cai³¹ ca¹¹ qiu⁵⁵ hiau²⁺ nai²⁺ nai²⁺ kancaicha jiu niaonainai* 看採茶就鬪乃乃]. The last was referring to idlers around the village.

But you could not hear the singing of mountain songs in the house. The reason was not that people could not sing, but that singing was not taken seriously like I said.... They could not be sung all day.

(Grandma Lo of Tongxiao [1939-])

Grandma Liu refers to the saying that "those who watch tea-picking plays are immoral" and Grandma Lo mentions conservative people refraining from singing and that it "was forbidden to sing songs at the place where there were tablets of deities." Both of these quotes call to mind the studies of *hua'er* songs in Qinghai and how they are prohibited from being sung in homes and temples and must be sung outdoors, away from one's family, due to the potentially erotic nature of their lyrics (YANG 1994). The erotic elements in the lyrics of Hakka mountain songs are also significant for the dynamic of work and leisure. This is also the reason mountain songs are "considered to be an annoyance to elders." In the lyrics at the

beginning of this article (page 38), which were sung by Grandma Huang, we can see an obvious reference to lovers and licentiousness:

Girls' lovers are handsome looking, just like the woods in a remote mountain.
 One rotten block may be chopped into seven or eight pieces.
 Girls are not supposed to be with their lovers.
 Boys cannot go uphill, thus sit on the hillside and sing mountain songs.
 People say boys are licentious, but boys can do nothing in life.

Furthermore, both Grandma Teng and Grandma Liu also related mountain songs to education. Grandma Liu said, "Mountain songs were for everyone, with or without education. People like us could sing them by remembering how others sing." However, Grandma Teng saw a negative correlation between folk songs and literacy, the latter of which acted especially as a marker of social status. She mentioned her maternal grandmother could sing mountain songs but she did not want to learn because she studied "Japanese books." For example:

I was reading Japanese books, so I did not want to learn mountain songs... My father could also sing a few of these songs at will. He could sing more or less to get along with those people.

As for me, when I sang in the past, I liked to sing alone instead of singing with others. I was quite like a gentleman throughout my life, so I usually sang alone.

(Grandma Teng [1932–] of Gongguan)

The relationship between education, cultural colonialism, and the constituted views of the connections between mountain songs, the erotic, and the immoral can be seen through Grandma Teng's narratives. This brings into question the multiple meanings of mountain songs and how these meanings are constituted diversely and dialectically in the contexts of the colony and the post-colony, the rural and the urban, as well as in different educational backgrounds and the different social, economic, and political statuses within the community.

CONCLUSION

As the *ghinnawa* allows Bedouin women to express their personal and intimate feelings (ABU-LUGHOD 1986), and the lament provides allows the bride to express her feelings freely (BLAKE 1978; HASE 1990; HO 2005; JOHNSON 1988; MCLAREN 2008; MCLAREN and CHEN 2000; WATSON 1996), mountain songs are also a form used to express romantic and erotic feelings that are otherwise forbidden from expression in traditional Hakka villages (HASE 1990). Feelings of freedom (*han¹¹ han¹¹*) or of release from their busy everyday lives (*mo¹¹ han¹¹*) were two of the most important themes expressed by the Hakka women we interviewed.¹² Through these women's accounts, in reference to mountain songs within the ordinary and extraordinary context of the local community, this article has also demonstrated Hakka women's creative and subjective feelings and experiences. Although hard work was the norm for these Hakka women, the contradiction and interde-

pendence between leisure and work created by singing or listening to mountain songs produced a certain release and poetic freedom.

Highmore states, “At the heart of Lefebvre’s writing is a dialectical approach based in Marxism. Even when Lefebvre’s assessment of modern everyday life is at its bleakest, the everyday always evidences the potential for transformation” (HIGHMORE 2002b, 225). The research presented here complements and extends Lefebvre’s theory by demonstrating multiple relationships between leisure and work. The following conclusions can be drawn: First, to encompass the ambiguity in blurring the line between leisure and work, the songs sometimes complimented work, while at other times they were separate from work. Second, mountain songs as leisure were related to emotion and erotica and were also stigmatized and labeled as immoral. Lefebvre’s dialectical strategy points out the contradiction and interdependence between leisure and work. This article appropriates the concept to interpret the narratives of elderly women living in rural Hakka societies and presents four characteristics of the dynamic between work and leisure in everyday life in Taiwan between 1930 and 1955:

1. leisure, such as singing or listening to mountain songs, and working, such as picking tea, can be compatible with each other;
2. leisure and work can be separable and unrelated;
3. mountain songs defined as leisure were related to expressions of feelings and the entanglement of erotica and morality;
4. those with a better education at the time of Japanese colonization had a different view of the leisure culture formed by mountain songs.

The women’s narratives of their experiences of mountain songs offer a window into the repetitive, ordinary local lives of rural Hakka society in northern Taiwan, traversing the period from the Japanese occupation to the days after World War II. This can be contrasted with work and leisure in an industrial and urban society. In the rural Taiwanese example, we see more tolerance for the fusion of leisure and work, as well as the influence of colonial liberalization and control. First, people at work and leisure were not always seeking escape through the dialectics of the relationship between work and leisure (DE CERTEAU 1984; HIGHMORE 2002a, 2002b; LEFEBVRE 1991; 2002). The elder women’s narrations showed how the rural Hakka in northern Taiwan defined non-work and work in a colonized agricultural society. Such argumentation deconstructs the so-called definite alienation of human nature and workplace in a capitalist industrial society. Additionally, leisure and work in the rural Hakka communities of northern Taiwan were not only local, but also *communal*, constituting a style of folk life and the means of personal communication and emotional expression. Finally, class labels were attached to literary and Japanese colonial culture, which meant that people could be categorized through the context of leisure and work. This article concludes that a mundane version of colonialism is expressed by the “murmuring voices of society” (DE CERTEAU 1984, vi) of the Hakka women living in rural Taiwan between 1930 and 1955.¹³

NOTES

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1. Note that the superscript numbers are symbols that indicate the tone of the Hakka language. Also, for transliteration conventions, this article uses romanization for two languages: Hakka and Mandarin Chinese. It uses pinyin for the Mandarin romanization with the exception of using the Wade-Giles system for Taiwanese scholars' names.

2. According to SCHIMMELPENNINCK (1997, 17), *shan'ge*, *xiaodiao* 小調, and *haozi* 號子, are “the three terms ... known and used by local singers in many parts of China but not everywhere, and not everywhere in the same way.”

3. For example, songs that encourage people to do good deeds (*Kien⁵⁵ San⁵⁵ Go²⁴*, *Quan-shange* 勸善歌), or those that encourage people to be filial to their parents (*Tu⁵⁵ Zii³¹ Go²⁴*, *Duzige* 渡子歌) both belong to the genre of *Piang¹¹ Bang³¹*. The following lyrics were sung by Grandma Hsu of Touwu [1932–] and also by Grandma Chang of Gongguan [1934–]: “Singing mountain songs brings jubilant joy. Giving their all when singing is how boys reach girls or girls reach boys. By listening to the songs, the old will be blessed with more happiness and longevity; the young, with a lot of money.”

4. The Japanese colonial government started lemongrass production in the Cholan area of Tahu in 1912. Once lemongrass production made the place prosperous, the Taiwan Spice Company was established in 1939. Lemongrass was still the main cash crop of Miaoli in the postwar era. In 1950, 2.88 million pounds of lemongrass was exported to Europe and America. In 1953, 5.15 million pounds was exported. Taiwanese lemongrass provided for 70 percent of global production, and the production in Miaoli topped all other counties in Taiwan (TSMHWW 1959, 35; HUANG and CHUNG et al. 1983a, 271).

5. Below is the list of abbreviations for genealogical terminology used in this article: F=father; M=mother; B=brother; Z=sister; S=son; D=daughter; H=husband; W=wife; P=parent; C=child; G=sibling; E=spouse; e=elder; Y=younger; MS=man speaker; WS=woman speaker (BARNARD and GOOD 1984, 4).

6. Grandma Teng was Chiu Chia-hsin's maternal grandfather's younger sister (MFZY), *ku²⁴po¹¹*.

7. In the interview, Grandma Lo used “*a²⁴ gun²⁴*” (“grandfather”) to refer to Chiu Chia-hsin's grandfather, which is a slip of the tongue. Actually the narrator was referring to the interviewer's great-grandfather.

8. This means that time went by so fast that even tedious, hard work was interesting.

9. Chang Hsin-pao (1911–1994) started the Xinhechang Tea Factory in 1948 and closed it down in 1986. During that time, it was the largest tea processing plant in Touwu.

10. He is referring to the area around Mingde reservoir of Touwu and Shitan Counties.

11. Grandpa Chiang and Grandma Hsieh are a couple. They were first introduced to each other by their boss in the Xinhechang Tea Factory when they both worked there.

12. The research presented here also invites additional research among elderly Hakka women. For example, the absence of song lyrics continues to silence important aspects of the singing and listening experience. Future research should involve the collecting of narratives about lyrics from the singers themselves, followed by the singers' own interpretation and contextualization of them. This would add more specificity to the narratives. For example, the translated lyrics in the article contain a great deal of local knowledge, double entendre, and ambiguous meanings, which could become clearer if the singers were consulted on the meanings of specific phrases during the translation process.

13. Full citation from DE CERTEAU: “The anonymous hero is very ancient. He is the murmuring voice of societies. In all ages, he comes before texts. He does not expect presentations” (1984, v).

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