

# **Indigenous and Community Based Management of Natural Resources and Protected Areas in Taiwan**

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In March 2015 I participated in the following two events held in Taipei:

- **The 2015 International Symposium of Community-based Conservation**
- **The 2015 Workshop on Protected Areas and Community-based Conservation**

Both events provided me with an opportunity to learn about initiatives and challenges relating to Indigenous and community based conservation in Taiwan and elsewhere in the region, and to introduce participants to the concepts of Country-Based Planning and Indigenous Protected Areas in Australia. In this report I provide a brief overview of the Symposium and Workshop, including the memorable field trips that preceded both events, and I provide some preliminary reflections on the potential for a country-based planning approach to be applied to addressing the aspirations, challenges and opportunities of Indigenous and community-based conservation in Taiwan.

## *Acknowledgments and thanks*

I wish to acknowledge and express my sincere thanks for all the assistance, kindness and hospitality I received from the hosts of both the International Symposium and the Protected Area Workshop. Everyone involved in these events went out of their way to ensure that I and the other guest presenters were made to feel very welcome and were well looked after at all times. I particularly want to thank Dr W. Jasmine Cheng and her assistant Peiying Lee, and Dr Dau-Jye Lu (DJ) and his Masters students July Yang and Sherry Hsieh who all contributed so much so the smooth running of both events.

I also wish to acknowledge and thank the Forestry Bureau of Taiwan which was the main sponsor of both events, including covering the cost of my travel, accommodation and field trip expenses – all of which was very much appreciated.

# International Symposium of Community-based Conservation

## *Symposium Conveners:*

- [School of Forestry and Resource Conservation, National Taiwan University
- [Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management, North Carolina State University

## *Co-conveners:*

- [College of Environmental Studies, National Dong Hwa University
- [Center for Taiwanese Indigenous Peoples' Education and Enterprise Development, National Chiayi University
- [Taiwan Environmental Information Center
- [Department of Geography, National Taiwan Normal University
- [Graduate Institute of Building and Planning, National Taiwan University
- [Department of Geography, National Taiwan University

**Coordinated by** Dr Dau-Jye Lu, Associate Professor, School of Forestry & Resource Conservation, National Taiwan University;

## *Symposium aim*

The aim of the Symposium was to provide an opportunity for Indigenous and community conservation practitioners from Taiwan and elsewhere to share their experiences and ideas, and to reflect on developments in this field since the last symposium on Community-based Conservation was held in Taiwan in 2005 - particularly resulting from legal and policy changes over the last decade. Legal changes include the passage of the *Indigenous Peoples Basic Law* in 2010 and amendments to the *Forestry Act* and other legislation to facilitate greater community involvement in natural resource management and protected area management.

## *Field Trip*

The Symposium began with a three day field trip to enable the international guest presenters gain some understanding of the achievements, aspirations, opportunities and challenges facing Indigenous Peoples and local communities regarding management of natural resources and protected areas. The following table summarises some issues relating to each of the locations visited on the field trip. Please note that the issues identified below are based on my very limited understanding of local cultures, histories and political contexts and do not reflect a comprehensive summary of all the important issues at each location.

Location	Description	Issues
Mukumgi, Hualien County	Indigenous community (Tong-Meng Tribe) located near the Qingshui Stream in beautiful valley.	~ Management of tourism ~ Impacts of logging ~ Maintaining culture ~ Control of traditional territory
Taroko National Park	National Park established in 1937 during Japanese colonial time. Includes impressive Taroko Gorge	~ Impacts of mass tourism ~ Recognition Indigenous values
Wu-Wei-Fang Wildlife refuge, Lang-Yang Plain, Llan County	Waterfowl refuge where community-led action has resulted in improved management.	~ Environmental degradation ~ Community-led action ~ Maintaining traditional management practices ~ Collaboration between community, resource users, government agencies and academics
Fushan Botanical Gardens, at boundary of Taipei and Yilan Counties	Part of Fushan Experimental Forest and Research Centre.	~ Access to researchers only ~ Recognition of Indigenous values

Names of guest presenters, topics and workshop themes covered during the two day Symposium are provided in the table below. More detailed proceedings of the Symposium, including abstracts and PowerPoint presentations are available at:

<https://sites.google.com/site/2015communityconservation/download>

<b>Mohammed Taghi Farvar,</b> “Development and Challenges of ICCAs”	<b>Hsing-Sheng Tai,</b> “Community-based Conservation in Taiwan: Retrospect and Prospect”.
<b>Myron F. Floyd,</b> “Health Benefits of Parks and Protected Areas: Current Evidence, Future Challenges”.	<b>Yu-Fai Leung,</b> “Participatory Monitoring to Support Protected Area Conservation: Local Examples, Global Trends, and Future Outlooks”.
<b>Isao Nakase,</b> “The Regional Planning & Management of Tamba Area based on the concept of Satoyama”.	<b>Erin Seekamp,</b> “Fostering success for community-based conservation: An exploration into indicators to building group capacity”.
<b>Dermot Smyth,</b> “Development and Challenge of Indigenous Protected Areas in Australia”.	<b>Jailab Kumar Rai,</b> “The history, challenges and opportunities of community conservation in Nepal”.
<b>Paul Porodong,</b> “Community-based conservation: Lessons from Sabah, East Malaysia”.	<b>Chung-Cheng Pu,</b> “Participation of indigenous people in natural resources in Taiwan”.
<b>James Bampton,</b> “Community Forestry in SE Asia: A Most Practical Institution - Insufficiently Institutionalised”	

**Following presentations several workshop sessions were held to discuss the following Themes:**

- Community and Recreation (e.g. Ecotourism, Stream Conservation)
- Community Development and Natural Resources Management (e.g. Sadoyama, Community Industry, Green Mark)
- Community and Biodiversity Conservation (discussion included NGO, Environmental Trust)
- The Partnership between Community and Government (e.g. Co-management, Community Conservation)

**At the conclusion of each day, a Forum was held on the following topics:**

- Indigenous People and Forest Management – Wind-falls Event
- Community Participation and Natural Resources Management – Community Governance and Co-management

## **Workshop on Protected Areas and Community-based Conservation 8-10, March, Cardinal Tien Cultural Foundation, Taipei**

**Host:** Forestry Bureau, Council of Agriculture Executive Yuan, Taiwan

**Organizers:**

- Taiwan Environmental Information Association (TEIA)
- Tamkang University, National Taiwan University

**Coordinated by** Dr W. Jasmine Chen, Department of International Tourism Management, Tamkang University.

Prior to the workshop guest presenters were taken on a one day field trip to visit Yangmingshan National Park (near Taipei) and an area in the countryside near New Taipei City where traditional rice-farming practices are being maintained and supported through community initiatives, educational tourism, niche marketing of rice-based products and the support of government agencies and city-based volunteers.

**Objectives of Workshop**

1. Understanding how governments in Southeast Asia and Australia support (or work with) community forestry or community-based conservation.
  - Q1: Why could other countries/governments support community-based PA? (i.e., brief history, barriers, mind-set and policy changes)
  - Q2. How and what do these government agencies/stakeholders do to make ways for community-conserved areas?
2. Identifying crucial concerns and issues for workable community-based PA frameworks.
  - Q3. What are the knowledge, abilities and skills needed among stakeholders to work together for sustainable livelihood and meeting conservation goals? (i.e., conflict management, effective communication, etc.)
3. Exploring possible future partnerships with international CCA and community forestry networks.
  - Q4. How to continue our dialogue and start our partnerships?

**Target Audience: Community-conserved protected area stakeholders, specifically:**

- Mid-level PA and community forestry managers
- Policy-makers in PA and forest management government agencies (central and local)
- PA rangers and community monitoring task force members
- Possible and existed stakeholders of community-based conservation areas

The Workshop comprised of a series of in depth presentations on cases studies from Australia, Nepal and Southeast Asia relating to the engagement of Indigenous peoples and local communities in protected area management delivered by invited guest presenters. Each presentation was followed by facilitated discussion with questions and contributions from Workshop participants.

**An overview of the guest presenters and their presentation topics is provided below.**

**James Bampton:** RECOFTC - The Center for People and Forests

**Presentation topics:**

- *Community Forestry in SE Asia: A Most Practical Institution - Insufficiently Institutionalised*
- *Resolving conflicts in community forestry*

20 years of practical forest field experience, much of it working directly with forest communities in Latin America, Africa and Asia, James joined RECOFTC in 2007 as the Chief Technical Advisor for a flagship capacity building project in Cambodia. The Cambodia project resulted in enabling more than 2,000 trainees to contribute to the development of 240 community forests in seven provinces in the country and a high-level engagement with the national government. Soon, a full-fledged country program took root in Cambodia with multiple national and regional projects. In 2009, James became the overall Manager for Program Coordination, Monitoring and Evaluation at RECOFTC, with the task of ensuring synergy across RECOFTC's entire program and develop functioning Country Programs in RECOFTC's other focal countries (PR China, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Nepal, Thailand and Vietnam). Just prior to this, James spent five years as a lead advisor to the Livelihoods and Forestry Program in Nepal and three years working with communities in the heart of the Brazilian Amazon. James has an MSc in Forestry from Oxford University, United Kingdom, and studied senior management at the Open University, United Kingdom.

**Dr Sudeep Jana Thing:** Dept of Planning and Geography, Curtin University, Australia.

**Presentation topic:**

- *Rethinking Community Based Conservation: A story of indigenous peoples, national park and participatory conservation in Nepal*

Sudeep's PhD research centres on the contestations between river dependant indigenous minorities groups and a national park in Nepal; political ecology of conservation and spatial politics. He has a range of research publications and outputs about conflicts between indigenous peoples rights and protected areas; social impacts of protected area policies and interventions; social movements and resistance of local population in the park buffer zones; rights based approach to conservation; community based conservation; community conserved areas; community forestry in Nepal. He is a co-vice chair of Young Professionals Specialist Group of the World Commission on Protected Areas, IUCN; an honorary member of ICCA Consortium and also affiliated to ForestAction, Nepal.

**Jailab Kumar Rai:** Tribhuvan University, Nepal

**Presentation topics:**

- *Recognition of Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas and Territories (ICCAs) in Nepal: Lessons from documentation, networking and policy dialogues*
- *History, challenges and opportunities of community conservation in Nepal*

Jailab is a PhD candidate in Anthropology and is working (since 2007) as a lecturer (Anthropology) at the Central Department of Sociology/Anthropology of Tribhuvan University,

Nepal. He is also working as a researcher in a national non-governmental organization (ForestAction Nepal) – dedicated to the critical action research and policy dialogue for productive, equitable and sustainable forest and natural resources in Nepal. He has developed an interest of understanding the interface between indigenous peoples and local communities with that of the formally declared protected areas management systems in Nepal through: a) independent researches; b) documentation and analysis of representative cases of Indigenous and Community Conserved Territories and Areas (ICCAs) in Nepal; c) facilitation for the formation and strengthening of 'ICCA Network Nepal'; and c) policy advocacy for the recognition of ICCAs in Nepal. He has also a range of research experiences on the exclusion/inclusion of indigenous peoples, community based biodiversity conservation, forestry and biodiversity conservation policies, local governance, and natural resource management in Nepal. His recent research is focused on the natural resources governance in Nepal with particular focus on interface between indigenous systems and state led forestry management. He is life member of Sociological and Anthropological Society of Nepal (SASON), honorary member of ICCA Consortium and general member of IUCN/CEESP.

**Dr Dermot Smyth:**

Research Institute for Environment and Livelihoods, Charles Darwin University, Australia

**Presentation topics:**

- Introducing Indigenous society and culture in the Australian context, including Indigenous engagement in national park management from the late 1970s to the present day.
- Development and Challenge of Indigenous Protected Areas in Australia - pathways to Indigenous-led innovations in protected area management outside the legal conservation framework.
- Country-based Planning

Dermot Smyth completed a Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Zoology at the Australian National University, Canberra, in 1970 and a Doctor of Philosophy (Zoology) at James Cook University, Townsville, in 1979. While undertaking wildlife research projects in Papua New Guinea, Indonesia and West Africa during his 20s, Dermot developed an interest in the relationships between Indigenous peoples and their local environments, including their role in natural resource management. On returning to Australia, Dermot began working with Aboriginal people, initially in Cape York Peninsula and later elsewhere in Australia, to document their environmental knowledge and to support their struggle for recognition as rightful users and managers of Australia's environments and natural resources. This work led to a long involvement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, Commonwealth State and Territory Government, Regional Natural Resource Management organisations, and conservation NGOs in the development of policies and programmes that support Indigenous peoples' roles as users and managers of National Parks, Marine Parks, fisheries and other natural resources. Dermot was the lead consultant in the development of Indigenous Protected Areas (IPAs) in the mid 1990s, and has been involved in IPA policy development and preparation of IPA Management Plans over the last 20 years.

## **Country-based Planning in Taiwan?**

My presentation on Country-based planning Australia led to a discussion on whether a similar approach could be useful to further support Indigenous and community engagement in protected area management in Taiwan. This section of the report explores this issue further, bearing in mind that it is a decision for Indigenous people and local communities to decide whether they wish to pursue this or any other approach to achieve their aspirations. By discussing this issue I am not making a recommendation whether or not Country-based planning could or should be applied in Taiwan.

### ***What is a Country-based plan?***

In Australia the word “Country” is used by Indigenous people to describe their traditional land and sea territories. “Country” means more than just a geographical area; it refers to all the cultural values Indigenous people hold for that area, including the economic and spiritual relationships they have with the environment, animals, plants, rivers, mountains and marine areas (referred to in Australia as “Sea Country”).

A Country-based plan is simply a plan for the Country (traditional territory) of a particular Indigenous group, as defined and selected by that group. If the plan is developed by a single family or clan group, the Country-based plan may relate to a relatively small area of a single clan estate. Alternatively, a Traditional Owner group may comprise members of several clans, or a whole language group or perhaps several language groups – in which case the Country-based plan would relate to a larger area. The critical factor to a successful Country-based plan is that the Indigenous group determines the cultural and geographic scale at which they wish to plan.

The Country-based planning approach enables Indigenous groups to express their own vision, values, strategies and proposed actions for their country, irrespective of the various layers of legislation and land ownership (tenures) and other constraints that have been placed upon their traditional territory since European settlement. Having developed their own vision for their country it is then possible for them to engage with the various government agencies, land holders and other interest groups to build partnerships to achieve some or all of that vision.

Country-based planning is a simple idea that can achieve significant outcomes for Indigenous people and for others with interests in country. If carried out with the full engagement of all Indigenous people associated with the planning area, and with opportunities for government agencies and other stakeholders to learn about Indigenous perspectives of their Country, sites and values, Country-based planning has the potential to assist Indigenous people to lead the development of respectful, collaborative outcomes rather than only respond to or engage with the initiatives of government agencies and others.

A Country-based plan is not a legal document and does not require government approval, although government agencies may contribute to the planning process. The power of a



Country-based plan comes from its ability to communicate Indigenous people’s values as an expression of cultural authority or interest in Country, whether or not that cultural interest or authority is currently recognised in law.

### ***Comparisons between Australia and Taiwan***

Australia is a huge continental island in the southern hemisphere, while Taiwan is a relatively small island in the northern hemisphere. Despite these obvious differences, there are some significant similarities between the two nations with respect to their histories, populations, relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples and efforts to improve the engagement of Indigenous peoples in protected area and natural resource management.

The table below summarises some of the key similarities between Australia and Taiwan.

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Australia</b>	<b>Taiwan</b>
Total Population	23 million	23 million
Indigenous peoples	3%	3%
Indigenous occupation	Thousands of years	Thousands of years
Colonial history	British colonisation since 1778	Dutch colonisation in 1600s, followed by Qing dynasty and later by the Empire of Japan
Immigration of non-Indigenous people	Large immigrant population, initially from UK and Ireland, and later from elsewhere in Europe and from around the world	Large immigrant population, primarily Han Chinese, including Hakka immigrants from Fujian and Guangdong in mainland China.
Indigenous land ownership	Extensive loss of Indigenous territories during the colonial period. Some land subsequently returned to Indigenous people and increasing recognition of cultural connection between Indigenous people and their traditional “Country”.	Extensive loss of Indigenous territories during the colonial period. Recent legal policy changes have resulted in increased recognition of Indigenous rights to their traditional territories.
Indigenous engagement in protected area management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exclusion of Indigenous people from protected area management until recently.</li> <li>• Increased efforts to support Indigenous engagement in protected area management, including through co-management of national parks and through Indigenous Protected Areas (IPAs).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exclusion of Indigenous people from protected area management until recently.</li> <li>• Increased efforts to support Indigenous engagement in protected area management, including through co-management of national parks.</li> </ul>

Characteristic	Australia	Taiwan
Indigenous use of natural resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainable use of natural resources for thousands of years prior to colonisation.</li> <li>• Restriction of access to natural resources during colonial and post-colonial times.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainable use of natural resources for thousands of years prior to colonisation.</li> <li>• Restriction of access to natural resources during colonial and post-colonial times.</li> </ul>

The above comparison does not seek to suggest that the Indigenous peoples of Australia and Taiwan have similar cultures or face identical challenges in their struggles for recognition<sup>1</sup>. However, there may be sufficient similarities to the relationships they experience with their respective national and local populations and governments to indicate that approaches that have worked in one country may achieve results in the other. In my view, the key similarities that may indicate the usefulness of Country-based planning are that Indigenous peoples in both nations:

- Are a very small majority of the total population;
- Have retained cultural connections to territories that they no longer own under current laws;
- Have aspirations to retain their unique cultures and identities;
- Have aspirations to develop sustainable economies based in their traditional territories.

From my experience in Australia, these are key factors that have led to the success of Country-based planning. Other essential factors have been Indigenous leadership and good facilitation of the planning process.

Country-based planning emerged in Australia following the failure of government-led engagement processes to achieve meaningful empowerment of Indigenous people. The other disadvantage of government-led engagement is that it typically places a large burden on a single government agency to deliver outcomes from the engagement process. Indigenous-led planning and engagement, on the other hand, can lead to collaboration with multiple government agencies and non-government partners that can open up more economic and other opportunities for all parties.

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<sup>1</sup>For further information on Indigenous engagement in protected areas and natural resource management in Australia and Taiwan see:

- Dermot Smyth and Chrissy Grant, (2012). Recognition and Support of ICCAs in Australia. In: Kothari, A. with Corrigan, C., Jonas, H., Neumann, A., and Shrumm, H. (eds). *Recognising and Supporting Territories and Areas Conserved By Indigenous Peoples And Local Communities: Global Overview and National Case Studies*. Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, ICCA Consortium, Kalpavriksh, and Natural Justice, Montreal, Canada. Technical Series no. 64. Available at: <https://www.cbd.int/pa/doc/ts64-case-studies/australia-en.pdf>
- Dau-Jye Lu, Taiban Sasala and Chih-Liang Chao (2012) *Analysis of International Law, National Legislation, Judgements, and Institutions as they Interrelate with Territories and Areas Conserved by Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities Report No. 17 Taiwan*. Published by Natural Justice in Bangalore and Kalpavriksh in Pune and Delhi. Available at: <http://naturaljustice.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Asia-Regional-Taiwan.pdf>

Adopting a Country-based planning approach is not an alternative to the pursuit of legal recognition of Indigenous rights to land, resources and protected areas. Rather, Country-based planning is a complementary approach that can be used at whatever stage the legal struggle has reached. At a psychological level, Country-based planning can assist Indigenous people to transition from complainants and legal combatants to policy innovators and collaborators that invite government agencies and other potential partners to contribute to an Indigenous led planning and implementation process.

In Australia, and perhaps in Taiwan also, there is increasing goodwill and good intentions within governments, government agencies and the wider population to improve relationship with Indigenous peoples to support their economic development opportunities. At the same time, Government agencies often struggle to find appropriate ways to put their good intentions into action and also they can feel fearful or threatened by the engagement process itself. In my experience, these fears are reduced when Indigenous people lead the planning process and take responsibility for working with whichever potential partners (national park agency, farmers, fishermen, local government, conservation NGO etc.) have an interest in their traditional territory. This is a process of diplomatically asserting cultural responsibility for traditional Indigenous territories through a non-threatening collaborative planning process.

I await with interest to see whether any aspects of Country-based planning may be of some use to the Indigenous peoples of Taiwan sometime in the future. In the meantime, I remain very grateful for the experiences and lessons I learnt about Indigenous and local community aspirations and initiatives in Taiwan that can contribute to improving similar processes in Australia.