

Rediscovering Local Environmentalism in Taiwan

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**Peter I-min Huang,  
"Rediscovering Local Environmentalism in Taiwan"**

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**Abstract:** In his article "Rediscovering Local Environmentalism in Taiwan" Peter I-min Huang challenges the domination of "the global" and the marginalization of "the local." Huang argues that by the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century globalism seemed to have toppled localism in ecocriticism debates. Ecocritics embraced enthusiastically such terms as Ursula K. Heise's "ecocosmopolitanism" and the arguments associated with this term which spoke for global forms of environmental thinking and practice. Yet, arguments for "the local" persist, in part because of Heise's constructive criticisms of it. Focusing on local environmental movements in Taiwan, Huang identifies and discusses scholarly work showing that "the local" is a durable concept and practice and not likely to disappear despite the denunciation of it. Moreover, referring to other recent studies, Huang argues that the global environmental imagination is indebted to local environmental movements.

## Peter I-min HUANG

### Rediscovering Local Environmentalism in Taiwan

Local environmental movements are greatly underestimated, under-recognized, and underfunded by governments throughout the world. One of the main reasons for this is the extraordinarily successful efforts by corporate global interests to discredit them on the basis of what distinguishes corporate global practices more than local environmental practices: dishonesty, inefficiency, and anachronistic thinking. In Taiwan, corporate global interests appeared in the decades following the end of World War II when Taiwan's political and newly emergent politically elite classes expedited unchecked and unregulated industrialization in order to transform Taiwan from an agricultural economy to an industrial economy. As of 2005, Taiwan has the highest density of nuclear power plants in the world, the highest use of cement per capita, one of the highest levels of species loss "due to over-building and habit destruction," more than thirty percent of its ocean shores are "covered in cement or by one of the 240 fishing ports," half of its rivers are "seriously polluted," and most of its rivers are threatened with "numerous water diversion projects (dams, irrigation, etc.)" (Winkler <<http://en.wildatheart.org.tw/story/109/6875>>). Today, the west coast of Taiwan, looking across the Taiwan Strait to China, is lined with petrochemical plants which spill megatons of toxic waste into a body of water that once teemed with marine and other aquatic life. The second largest city in Taiwan, Kaohsiung, is a major industrial city. The petrochemical industry there accounts for almost a quarter of the city's industrial output, and studies show that in counties such as Kaohsiung that have a high density of petrochemical plants, air quality is significantly poorer and life expectancy is significantly lower than in counties where there are few or no petrochemical plants (Chen, Lin, Chan <<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3995686/>>). The island's once incomparably beautiful east coastline, now profusely littered with garbage (much of which is washed ashore from refuse in the Pacific Ocean), is being industrialized under a different but equally short-sighted form of global thinking. The owners and operators of such corporate groups as Miramar (Lee 3) are falling backwards over each other in their scramble to transform Taiwan's east coast into a long line of private luxury hotels that the world's globalized middle-class citizens will be able to enjoy and the world's poorest local populations will not (and the world's richest populations will shun for their mediocrity). Not a single one of those resorts is being planned with the main purpose to preserve or sustain the older natural environments of the region or bring long term social, economic, and environmental benefits to the mostly Aboriginal, Hokla, and Hakka Taiwanese people who live there. Government-backed corporate industrial plans to radically transform the relatively unindustrialized southeast of Taiwan, affectionately known as "the backyard of Taiwan," reflect the same reductive, one-size-fits all global thinking that aggressively promoted the petrochemical and plastics industries in Taiwan in the post-World War II decades (see, e.g., *Beyond Beauty: Taiwan from Above*).

Despite the lack of acknowledgement of local environmental movements in Taiwan, these movements have succeeded in slowing or halting a number of recent corporate global industrial projects including the Fourth Nuclear Power Plant near Taipei, mega dam projects in the central and south of Taiwan, petrochemical industry projects, and the Miramar Resort Village (美麗灣度假村) in Dulan (都蘭), Taitung County (台東縣). Other projects that environmentalists are protesting are the construction or expansion of large industrial facilities, so-called science parks, in the central counties of Changhua (彰化), Maioli (苗栗), and Yunlin (雲林). Environmentalists are fighting enormous odds, including a meretricious rhetoric of "the global." Disappointingly, this rhetoric has influenced many environmental thinkers in the arts (as well as in the sciences) to jump on the flight planes of "the global" and ditch the slow boats of "the local." In the study at hand, I reappraise "the local" in the face of arguments directed, often disingenuously and dishonestly, against it. In particular, I argue for the importance of local environmental initiatives and movements. These commitments and actions include undertakings by scholars, as well as by activists, and by scholars based in the arts and the sciences.

In the arts, ecocritics, Indigenous studies scholars, postcolonialists, Taiwanese language and literature scholars, and English-language and literature scholars established recently the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment Taiwan (ASLE Taiwan), an association that takes its name from the first ASLE association based in the United States. Not long after ASLE Taiwan was established

in 2009, this same group of scholars started up a "cross-strait" ecocriticism conference, the location of which alternates between China and Taiwan. The same group of scholars joined the biennial East Asia ASLE symposium. Similar to the "cross-strait" conference, the joint symposium promotes scholarly exchanges among scholars in East Asia. The inaugural Cross-Strait Conference on Environmental Literature took place in 2011 in Xiamen, Mainland China. Members of ASLE Taiwan joined members of ASLE Japan and ASLE Korea for the first time at the East Asia ASLE symposium in Seoul, Republic of Korea in 2010. In addition to the association of ASLE Taiwan, the "cross-strait" conferences held every year in Taiwan and China and the biennial East Asia ASLE symposia, there is the Tamkang International Conference on Ecological Discourse. To date, there have been five of these conferences, which are hosted by the Department of English at Tamkang University. As the name ASLE Taiwan adopted reflects, ASLE Taiwan (and the conferences which inspired scholars to establish it) points to the work of many environmental thinkers who are not locally based scholars. However, the majority of ASLE Taiwan's members and the main organizers of the conferences ASLE Taiwan supports are locally based. These scholars understand the importance of global connections and global forms of environmental theory and practice. However, their work increasingly is focusing on local, Taiwanese environmental writers, artists, and activists. The latter group include, for example, Tie-min Chung (鍾鐵民), Ka-shiang Liu (劉克襄), and Guangzhong Yu (余光中).

Chung (1941-2011) was the son of the distinguished Hakka writer and pastoral poet Li-ho Chung (鍾理和) (1915-1960). A prolific writer himself, Chung was one of the founding members of the foundation that was established in honor of Li-ho Chung's contribution to Taiwanese literature (Chung, Jake 16). The Chung Li-ho Literary Foundation opened in 1983 in the Chung Li-ho Memorial Hall in Meinong (美濃), Kaohsiung (Chung, Jake 16). The hall was the first civilian-founded memorial hall dedicated to literary writers in Taiwan (Chung, Jake 16). One of Chung's major works, *Yorkshire Sunset* (約克夏的黃昏), critiques the industrial development that destroyed many farm villages in Taiwan in the late 1960s (Chen, Fan-ming 571). Chung also engaged in social activism throughout his life, and in 1993 he participated in the successful protest against the construction of the Meinong Reservoir (Chen, Fan-ming 572). In 1992, a group of industrialists submitted a plan to the government to build a mega dam to provide water supply for the Southern Taiwan Science Park. Chung and other environmental activists including residents of Meinong Township protested that the building of the reservoir would irreparably damage the Yellow Butterfly Valley and the many species of flora and fauna that are unique to the area. They also argued that if the dam were to flood, it would threaten the entire human population of the town of Meinong (Chung, Jake 16). In 1993, Chung led a protest against the dam project. The protest was held in front of the Legislative Yuan government buildings in Taipei. The protest drew national attention, and the government eventually abandoned the project (Chung, Jake 16). In his writings, which include novels as well as essays, Chung emphasizes the importance of engaging in and supporting local environmentalism. This kind of environmental involvement gives rise to more extensive, global forms of environmental thinking and action. It does not replace the global, but it is necessary for the global.

Liu, a prolific writer and activist, is well known for a nonfictional piece entitled *A Posthouse of Migratory Birds* (Wei and Lu 54), and for a novel entitled *He-lien-mo-mo the Humpback Whale* (座頭鯨赫連麼). As much of his Liu's other writings reflect, these two publications focus on Taiwanese environmental issues including calls to end nuclear power in Taiwan and calls for the preservation of Taiwan's last remaining wetlands. Liu is Taiwan's most important environmental writer and activist today. Yu, a writer who focuses more on the experience of longing for one's homeland, nonetheless is an important writer for ecocritics because of his extraordinary ability to capture the agricultural roots of many Taiwanese people. Born in 1928 in Nanjing, Yu fled from Nanjing when the Japanese Army invaded it. He returned to his home with his family, but he was forced to leave again during the Chinese Civil War. He then escaped to Taiwan. He is a graduate of National Taiwan University, holds an MFA degree from the University of Iowa, and professor emeritus at National Sun Yat-sen University. In such poems as "Train passing Fang Liao" ("車過枋寮"), Yu memorializes Taiwan's agricultural communities. He also implicitly argues for preserving local agricultural traditions. Environmental and social justice activists in Taiwan push this argument further. They emphasize the need to hold on to agriculture in Taiwan without continuing past practices of cash crop farming or engaging in newer forms of agro-industrial farming. In articulating this argument, they sparked a major social and environmental protest known

as the Sunflower Movement (太陽花學運). It began in March 2014 as a small student-led protest against a so-called free trade agreement between Taiwan and China that the Taiwanese government was considering. It escalated rapidly over the next months and gained the respect of many Taiwanese people, not the least because its leaders emphasized from the outset that the protest must be a non-violent civic form of protest. On 18 March 2014, a small group of university students occupied the Legislative Yuan buildings, Taiwan's Parliament in Taipei, in order to protest the pending service trade agreement between Taiwan and China. They argued that the agreement had been pushed too quickly and surreptitiously through the Legislative Yuan by Taiwan's incumbent political party, the Chinese Nationalist Party (Kuomintang [KMT]). By the evening of the same day, the protestors' numbers had swelled to almost two hundred, and international media were covering the event. By 30 March, almost half a million people (or about 2.5% of the population of Taiwan) had packed the streets around the presidential building in a massive show of support for the student movement. In response, President Ying-jeou Ma announced that the government would re-review the service trade agreement before taking any further steps to enact it. This concession, however, was not enough to restore Taiwanese people's faith in their government. In November 2014, voters across Taiwan reflected their discontent with the policies that the government had been pursuing. These include policies that make it easier for corporate global industrial interests to access and control local markets. In the "nine-in-one" election of all major city mayors, municipality mayors, and county commissioners, people voted overwhelmingly for candidates who are more for than against local, Taiwan-based management and control of the economy. The public was not persuaded by the "race cards" and "loyalty cards" that the KMT used in its argument that Taiwan could depend on outside interests to manage its economic and political affairs (Keating 8). It has used these cards in the past in order "to force its version of the nation's history and identity on the public"; however, in the recent elections, those cards did not give the government the winning hand. Instead, the "race" and "loyalty" arguments "resurrect[ed] ... the importance and need of self-reliance" (Keating 8). The majority of Taiwanese voters "sent the KMT a clear warning ... [they] do not want the Nationalists [KMT] to take measures that would have it eaten up" by non-local interests (Loa and Shih 1).

The public debates the Sunflower Movement rekindled focused in the main on two main policies that the government has been advocating and aggressively pursuing off and on for much of the last quarter of a century: a policy to endorse free-economic zones that mainly benefit the owners (offshore as well as domestic) of large, multi-national and trans-national corporations and a policy to create service trade agreements that in effect heavily discriminate against local Taiwanese communities and businesses (producers of local agricultural produce and providers of locally run and administered public services) through the offering of tax breaks and low interest loans to their larger corporate global competitors. The government is pushing these policies under a powerful and disingenuous rhetoric that equates "the global" with economic, social, and political progress and "the local" with economic, social, and political stagnation. Many people in Taiwan have been badgered, bullied, cajoled (and also frequently bought) into believing that global forms of industrialization are "progress," that the enormous environmental (including species) losses sustained in the period of the global industrialization of Taiwan was inevitable and therefore the individuals and groups of people who invested in that global industrialization can be hardly held accountable for those losses, and that local environmentalism is obsolete. Even among the academic community, in the arts as well as the sciences, this rhetoric has misled many scholars to dismiss or disparage "the local" and embrace "the global."

There are good reasons not to tout "the local," as Ursula K. Heise lays these reasons out in her 2008 *Sense of Place and Sense of Planet*. Heise points out the "conceptual dilemmas" in current theories regarding "the relationship of identity and place" (8). As Heise argues, the dominant position in the modern environmentalism movement since its inception in the 1960s and 1970s has reflected many questionable kinds of investment in "a return to the local and a celebration of a 'sense of place'" (8). Heise analyzes the limitations and weakness of this position by identifying particular and profoundly disturbing ideologies and practices of "the local" in the past which might be recognized under the perspective of local environmentalism today. One particularly powerful example she provides is the program of genocide carried out against Jewish people and other minority human populations by the nazis during World War II. The political party and the many people who supported it appropriated many of the "Romantic symbols of connection to soil, place, and region" to carry out this program (9).

As Heise argues further, because of the increasing connectedness of societies around the globe, new forms of environmental thinking and action must replace older forms that give too much emphasis to "the local." Based on the work of Giles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, Heise borrows the term "deterritorialization" to make the argument that environmental thinkers must commit to practices that are not premised primarily "on ties to local places" but rather on "ties to territories and systems that are understood to encompass the planet as a whole" (10). This kind of environmentalism will require "greater detachment from the local place" (13). It also will call for questioning arguments in defense of "the local" that rely on claims that a given local place is sacrosanct, or cannot be developed or be otherwise modified by humans because it has inherent spiritual, or more-than-human value.

Heise's arguments against "the local" are well worth making; however, they can be easily manipulated by corporate industrial interests, and in Taiwan they are distorted. Corporate industrial developers tear down places which are environmentally and socially sustainable not in order to promote social, cultural, and ethnic diversity but to capitalize on lucrative global industries—namely the oil and computer global industries. A case in point is the industrial development of Taiwan's once extensive wetlands. These areas are unique and vital ecosystems, as important as tropical rainforests and other carbon-sequestering and carbon-recycling systems. They are critical to air, soil, and water quality. When they are replaced with petrochemical plants, as most wetlands in Taiwan have been, air and water quality plummets and soils (including agricultural soils) become contaminated with industrial metal waste. Spokespeople for the petrochemical and computer industries contend that the industry has brought benefits to Taiwanese. However, what their arguments omit is that the benefits are distributed unevenly and unequally. The benefits also are short term. The primary investors and shareholders do not live in the close vicinity of the computer industry and petrochemical industry plants (so-called naphtha cracker plants): they live in places where air quality, water quality, and soil quality are better. The money they earn from the oil and computer industries gives them the luxury of living elsewhere and of having "greater detachment from place" (Heise 13): many Taiwanese people do not have this luxury.

Another argument that Heise makes against "the local" that is easily distorted by corporate global industrial interests is in her discussion of "eco-cosmopolitanism," where she refers to Deleuze's and Guattari's term "cosmopolitanism" in order to argue that "the local" or "sense-of-place" is becoming increasingly tenuous for many people in the world, including for environmental thinkers (41-51). Notions of "place" and "the local" are anachronistic because of developments in digital technology, the globalization of information, and recent global migration patterns of human populations. Heise uses the term "eco-cosmopolitanism" to defend global forms of environmental thinking and experience, or forms of environmental knowledge and experience that are more abstract and materially shifting and less concrete and materially situated or fixed (62). Eco-cosmopolitanism refers in particular to the awareness of and respect for emergent networks of information and communications technologies that might create global environmental forms of governance which fuse "digital networks with the geological structures of the planet" (90). It also refers to the recognition of significant demographic changes in the world today. Human (as well as other) populations are increasingly being defined by factors other than geographical place or the amount of time lived in one geographical place. Referring to Anthony Giddens's concept of "disembeddedment," Heise argues that global or eco-cosmopolitan forms of environmentalism more than local forms of environmentalism have the capacity to connect "individual bodies to social collectives and geographical places around the globe" (51).

The kinds of "eco-cosmopolitan" arguments Heise makes in defense of "the global" environmental imagination all too often end up in the hands of corporate global industrial interests including the corporate global industrial tourism industry. A group that represents this industry is the Miramar Group in Taiwan. It built a resort hotel with an illegal license, without adhering to environmental regulations, without consulting with Indigenous groups, and "against the ruling of the High Court" (McKee <<http://en.wildatheart.org.tw/story/109/7194>>). At the same time, it advertised the project as one that would recognize, respect, and preserve the local environment of the town of Dulan (都蘭) in Tainan County (台東縣). It also claimed that it would benefit the local population, including the Amis (one of Taiwan's largest Aboriginal tribes). In reality, it seems intent on privatizing long stretches of coast and building hotels that are travesties of environmental and economic sustainability. As of 2012, other



corporate industrial interests in Taiwan had planned thirty-eight similar industrial development projects along the east coast of Taiwan, from Hualien to Taitung (McKee <<http://en.wildatheart.org.tw/story/109/7194>>).

Heise also refers to the work of Ulrich Beck in risk theory in order to point out that many local environmentalists who are engaged in battles to hold on to "the local" are fighting for quite recent places and spaces, including environments that would be unrecognizable to the people who lived there fifty years ago (142). Here again, these arguments are hijacked by corporate global industrial interests. In Taiwan such interests contend that farming communities are using the land in ways that are hardly less environmentally sustainable than those of science parks. There is considerable truth in this. Many farmers cultivate cash crops—tea, bananas, pineapples, and so forth. Tea growers in Taiwan are cultivating tea in ever increasing amounts in mountain areas to satisfy the middle class demand for "high mountain" tea. These growers, as well as other corporate industrial growers, rely on outdated and unsustainable production methods. These methods include the use of excessive amounts of industrially produced pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers, and the cultivation of a single crop across the entire side of a mountain, which causes landslides and water and soil loss. However, there is very strong support for organic farming in Taiwan, and most of this kind of farming relies on "the local." In addition, Taiwanese people are beginning to heed the calls by Aboriginal leaders to slow down the ongoing industrialization of the island, regardless of whether this is industrial farming of plants, industrial farming of animals, or industrial production of a range of commodities ranging from plastics to computers. Aboriginal people rarely if ever used the environment and animals and plants in this way. For them, much of Taiwanese agriculture is not markedly different from the industrial science parks and petroleum industries that line the west coast of Taiwan, or the global corporate hotel industry that is threatening to overtake the east coast. If the public does heed those calls, it is doubtful that Taiwan will return to what it was as little as one hundred years ago. The more likely positive outcome will be a greater awareness of Taiwan's extant natural environments and greater support for environmentally sustainable uses of, and partnerships with, those environments.

Heise's arguments against "the local" where "the local" refers to arguments in defense of places which are not much more than a hundred years old are similar to a set of arguments Lawrence Buell makes in his 2005 study entitled *The Future of Environmental Criticism*. Buell argues that "place-attachment" has been rendered "nugatory and obsolete" in the period of modernity, in particular in the period since the turn of the nineteenth century (64). One can no longer theorize "the local" without confronting both the "fragility" of both the term and the places that it names (Buell 62). This is particularly true of regions colonized by a dominant political and ethnic group. There are few regions in the world where invading peoples have not pushed aside the oldest Indigenous peoples. Colonizer and settler peoples have long been eradicating or profoundly altering "place" as well as globalizing "place" to the extent that what were once recognized as local environments are now "translocal" environments, reproducible around the globe (Buell 62-63). Nonetheless, I argue that there is growing awareness of and respect for "the local," since this speaks for a form of thinking and action—a "politics of resistance"—that seeks to correct the colonialist and imperialist "excesses" of modernity (Buell 65). Buell points to the example of bioregionalism: although this environmental movement actually sits between "the local" and "the global," it tips more toward "the local" insofar as it focuses on environments at the level of "the region" or "the transnation" (Buell 82). In Taiwan, ecocritics Hsinya Huang (黃心雅) and Shiu-huah Serena Chou (周序樺) are involved in a particularly exciting "island ecologies" bioregionalist project. Chou was one of the first scholars in Taiwan to recognize the environmental significance of Taiwanese writer Ming-yi Wu's *The Man with the Compound Eyes* including the arguments that the novel makes about the corporate industrial trashing of Taiwan and the need to defend more vigorously local, Taiwanese environments and identities (see, e.g., "Sense," "Wu's" <<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol16/iss4/3>>) and Huang published work about Aboriginal writer Syaman Rapongan (夏曼·藍波安), a Tao Aboriginal who lives on Orchid Island (蘭嶼), the traditional home of his people and the island where nuclear waste has been dumped clandestinely by the government for many years (see, e.g., "Indigenous" <<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol16/iss4/2>>, "Representing"). Further, there is the work of scholars including Elizabeth DeLoughrey, Jill Didur, Anthony Carrigan, and Karen Nicole Salt who study Taiwan's environmental issues in the context of post-colonialism and in terms of what its ecologies share with other "island ecologies"—those characterizing

countries in the Asia-Pacific region, as well as those which distinguish the more distantly situated island nations in the Caribbean.

Axel Goodbody, another ecocritic and literary and cultural studies scholar, defends "the local" in the contexts of literary, cultural, and other aesthetic productions. In his 2011 "Sense of Place and lieu de mémoire: A Cultural Memory Approach to Environmental Texts," Goodbody reads several literary texts by inflecting ecocritically the arguments of scholars who specialize in cultural memory studies. He summarizes the differences and convergences between ecocriticism and cultural memory studies whereby ecocriticism is concerned with "nature and space" and cultural memory studies are mainly about "history and time." He argues that "the interaction between personal experience and imagining on the one hand and collective values and identity on the other ... converge in place" (55). This convergence is particularly manifest in the work of Aboriginal writers in Taiwan. Further, as part of his argument in defense of "place," Goodbody also responds to Heise's critiques of "place" and "the local" under the concept of eco-cosmopolitanism. As I argue earlier, corporate global industrial interests often employ a rhetoric that appears identical to Heise's eco-cosmopolitanism but that is in fact a grossly distorted version. Goodbody also points out the potential misuses of the rhetoric of eco-cosmopolitanism. As he argues, eco-cosmopolitanism is very useful and even necessary in order for people to develop "a sense of planet," but the term should not be theorized or practiced to forward the argument that "place" is defunct "as a cultural phenomenon" (56). Heise "rightly" challenges the notion that environmental consciousness is grounded in ways only having to do with "place" insofar as she points to the importance of "awareness of the connections between places" as well as to the significance of "attachment to a particular place" (Goodbody 57). Nonetheless, Heise "underestimates the affective ties with place which arise out of identification, as part of processes of individual and collective identity-construction" (Goodbody 57). By "identification," Goodbody refers to the understanding of "place" as something inclusive of, but not limited to a geographical site. Places carry power as "symbolic entities," as well as "geographical realities," they play "a central role in subject constitution," and they serve "crucial political, social, and cultural functions" (Goodbody 57).

As Goodbody goes on to argue, "literary lieux de mémoire" [literary places of memory] serve an important function "as localizations for a utopian vision of human reconciliation with nature which would otherwise lack concrete embodiment" (66). Against the claim found under the term eco-cosmopolitanism and other language of global environmentalism that "the increasing connectedness of societies today demands the emergence of new forms of culture which are no longer anchored in place," Goodbody argues that "place" must not be abandoned entirely (66). Environmental thinkers and activists in Taiwan are making this argument, in both the academic community and among social and environmental activists. Many of the latter represent Taiwan's farmers and belong to such groups as Taiwan Rural Front (TRF). They are well aware that it will be difficult for Taiwan to return to a primarily agricultural economy. At the same time, they are fighting policies under which over seventy percent of food products are imported and under which the government pays farmers to leave some of their lands fallow (under a so-called fallow-field policy) (Luo A4). TRF is particularly vocal in calling on the government to balance industrial interests with agricultural interests and to do so sustainably and by relying on locally-based communities of people.

The environmental justice scholar Vandana Shiva and the social and environmental science scholars Sheila Jasanoff and Marybeth Long Martello are three other significant thinkers who speak for "the local" against the criticisms levied against it. In their introduction to their 2004 collected volume *Earthly Politics: Local and Global in Environmental Governance*, Jasanoff and Martello acknowledge the necessity for "complementarity between the local and the global," but they give more weight to "local epistemologies" (17). They also argue that environmental governance must emphasize local forms of knowledge as well as global forms in its address of global-scale social and ecological challenges (9). "Local, traditional, and indigenous knowledges" are and will continue to be "useful instruments for sustainable development and for connecting with 'on the ground' political constituencies" (9). As they also claim, local epistemologies, which are often but not always non-scientific and non-western based, have tended to be neglected in environmental governance decision making. They offer several reasons for this oversight. The first reason ties to the fact that scholars often investigate "the local" and "the global" in isolation from one another or underestimate the "close relationship" between "the global" and "the local" (14). The second reason is that conventional studies of globalization often "reinforce



simple dualities" such as "modern" versus "traditional" and "Western" versus "non-Western," and under these dualities scholars invariably denigrate "the local" as "pre-modern" and "backward," "doomed to erasure" and "not worthy of careful and rigorous analysis" (14). Third, much of the academic literature on environment and development insists on "the inevitability" of globalization and represents localization as "a hindrance to the progress of globalization" (14). This same literature also reinforces a "static vision of local and global" rather than an understanding of "the local" and "the global" as "fluid and subject to strategic reinterpretation" (14). For much of the last thirty years, Taiwanese people have been willing to accept the arguments of corporate global industrial interests. They have been willing to give up their plains, mountains, rivers, and oceans to urban and industrial developers who have told them that the only way forward for Taiwan is become part of "the global" community by allowing industrial corporate development. But they are increasingly less willing to do so today, and they are increasingly recognizing that what they had in the past was not all backward, primitive, or hopelessly local.

In her 2005 *Earth Democracy* Vandana Shiva's puts forward equally strong arguments for "the local." Similar to Jasanoff and Martello, she notes that although local environmental movements have significantly influenced global forms of environmental thinking and action, scholars have not acknowledged sufficiently the contribution of local environmentalism. If ecocritics and other thinkers continue to ignore or dismiss the contribution of local environmentalism to global environmentalism movements, it is unlikely that the latter will be sustainable. As Shiva also argues, corporate global industrial interests are compromising many global environmental movements. These interests are deeply inimical to "economic democracy": under "contrived rules of trade" and so-called free-trade agreements, global corporations invade "autonomous and sovereign spaces" and distribute profits to a very small number of people (the owners of the corporations and a small number of shareholders) (74). Various Taiwanese social and environmental justice groups are making this argument, and they are drawing more support from the public judging from the recent success of the Sunflower Movement and the outcome of the "nine-in-one" mayoral elections in November 2014. As Shiva argues further, corporate globalization regularly forces local governments to grant immunity to them from "any influence or regulation by the state" (74). Taiwanese people are making this argument as well. Like Shiva, they are demanding more decentralized, small-scale organizations that locally manage and control resources (64). These kinds of localization in effect "[treat] every place as the center of the world, placing every person, every being as the center of ever widening circles of compassion and care," and it is the key both to global democracy—"earth democracy" (Shiva 62)—and local democracy (Shiva 82). Corporate global organizations, in contrast, are insensitive to "place" and "the local." They devalue local natural resources or divert local natural resources for commodity production and capital accumulation. In Taiwan, as in many other places in the world, corporate globalization has been responsible for the present ecological crisis more than any other form of globalization (Shiva 64). It is destroying "the most intense relationships," those that are at the level of "the local" (Shiva 64), it is a new kind of "enclosures of the commons" (Shiva 2), and it is transforming "all beings and resources into commodities [that] robs diverse species and people of their rightful share of ecological, cultural, economic, and political space" (Shiva 2).

In conclusion, the kinds of resistances of "the local" Buell, Goodbody, Heise, Jasanoff and Martello, and Shiva defend are manifest increasingly in the work of environmental writers, thinkers, scholars, and activists in Taiwan. Their challenge of government policies and practices is promoted under the language of "the local," and their ideas are taken up by social and environmental justice groups such as the Northern Coast Anti-Nuclear Action Alliance, Environment and Animal Society of Taiwan, Taiwan Rural Front (a non-government organization and social movement organization formed by farmers committed to social and environmental justice), National Alliance of Taiwan Women's Association (a coalition formed by Taiwanese rural women), Taiwan Homemakers' Union Consumers Cooperative (an organization started twenty years ago by a group of housewives), and Wild at Heart Legal Defense Association (an association that supports the environmental, social, economic and nonhuman environment). Even Taiwanese who are suspicious of any form of "socialist" ideas have begun to rethink the global industrial corporate capitalism that seemed miraculously to transform overnight their place after the 1980s after the lifting of martial law. More than any other movement in Taiwan and China since the people's movement that ended feudalism in China at the dawn of the twentieth century, the

Sunflower Movement has stirred the hearts and minds of Taiwanese people. Many other local movements are drawing respect in Taiwan. These include scholarly communities such as the above referred to ASLE Taiwan, ASLE associations based in East Asia, and the organizers of the recently established "cross-strait" conferences between Chinese and Taiwanese ecocritics. At the turn of the twentieth century the world seemed to be in "the grip of globalization" (Jasanoff and Martello 1). Today, "the global" continues to hold appeal; however, it might not continue to be taken for granted as the only way forward: the local cannot "shut itself off from "translocal forces" (Buell 88), but "the global" also cannot function without the recognition that "the local" is a peer of "the global" and, in countless instances, even its elder and guide.

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