

From cultural nationalism to transnational and personal arts: The role of dancers and women in the reconstruction of the Taiwanese identity

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ABSTRACT

During the 1970s, U.S. policy shifted to embrace China, and the United Nations recognized China, abandoning Taiwan. This was a deep psychological blow to the Taiwanese people, prompting the rise of Taiwanese nationalism. In 1974 Mr. Lin Hwai-min established Cloud Gate Dance Theater, the first professional modern dance company in Taiwan. This paper starts with an analysis of the significance and impact of *Legacy*, Cloud Gate's signature work, created in 1978, and then addresses the role of dancers in developing Taiwanese identity in general, particularly of female dancers. It shows that, as Taiwan has become a modern civil society, Lin has worked to convey a sense of national identity by selectively utilizing Chinese and Taiwanese cultural legacy as the basis for his choreographic work. In the process, Cloud Gate's female dancers have gradually grown from politically inexperienced and innocent youth to conscientious interpretive artists. They have drawn on their artistry as performers, their ability to influence Lin's choreography and their expertise as educators and visionaries to contribute to an emerging cultural and national identity. As Lin's work evolved and the next generation of choreographers appeared on the scene, defining Taiwanese identity became more complex and fluid. This work then demonstrates that, as Taiwan emerges as more modernized, globalized and democratized, the paradigm has shifted decidedly from a national consciousness to a transnational one, and the next generation brings self-focus, personal reflection and individual experience to the concert stage.

Introduction

It was December 16, 1978, the day that President Jimmy Carter announced that the United States would establish formal diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China and sever its official diplomatic ties with the Republic of China as of January 1, 1979. The people in Taiwan were shocked. Once again, Taiwan

became—as described by the title of a book, written in 1943–1945, by the famous writer Wu Zhuoliu—*The Orphan of Asia* (Wu, 2000).

That same day, in the gymnasium of Taiwan's Chia-yi Family Professional School Cloud Gate Dance Theater (Cloud Gate), the first modern dance troupe, founded by Lin Hwai-min, performed the signature masterpiece *Legacy*. This full-length epic dance drama is “a tribute to the heroic Chinese pioneers who emigrated from the mainland to Taiwan about 300 years ago” and a “work in the celebration of the new land and a new prospect for an age-old race” (Cheng, 1989:44). A huge crowd overflowed the theater, including local teachers, students, working-class citizens and women, many of whom were walking into a theater for the first time in their lives to see this performance (Yang, 2006:129). “The action of the work takes place as ritual,” recollected Cheng Shu-gi, one of the the earliest members of Cloud Gate and a performer in the original production of *Legacy*. After a ritualistic prologue, the dancers, dressed in traditional peasant garments, “set out on the voyage their ancestors once took” with stark, earthy and vigorous movements against a background of huge waves created by the motion of a large white cloth, accompanied by drum beats and organic and folkloric music (Cheng, 1989:44–45). From the beginning to the end, the people on stage and in the audience experienced sadness and joyfulness together, cheering and crying at the same time (Yang, 2006:129). “It was an emotional evening,” Lin recalled. “Dancers and the audience were all emotionally involved. Dancers were dancing with life, and they were not just performing” (Mimeo Films Ltd., 2005). Yang Kai-ru, then a student at the Chia-yi Family Professional School, stated: “I was moved most by the scene near the end of the show when a large and long piece of red curtain flew and fell down on to the stage. I can still clearly envision that scene and artistic conception today” (cited in Yang, 2006:129–130). “We all felt the indignation,” Cheng adds. “An emotion poured out when ‘the ancestors crossed the ocean.’ With the shouting and yelling the power became enormous” (Mimeo Films Ltd., 2005).

It seemed coincidental that President Carter's announcement and the premiere of *Legacy* occurred on the same day. It was not, however, entirely a coincidence. The production of *Legacy* was an outcome of the long effort by Lin to boost the national spirit among Taiwanese people during a crisis of national identity. Although Nigel Rosser believed that “*Legacy* avoided the overt nationalism often associated with this type of production” (“—Enduring Legacy,” *Hong Kong Standard*, June 5, 1986, n.p.; see also Cheng, 1989:49), the nationalistic and passionate tone of the show still resonates. As Lin revealed to an interviewer later,

Although the United States and the People's Republic of China established diplomatic ties on December 16, 1978, my real motivation for composing *Legacy* can be traced back to the era prior to these ties. Isadora Duncan composed a dance, to the music of “Marseillaise” in World War I, which provided the French people with spiritual support. I am not Duncan and *Legacy* may not be as good, but our hearts are similar. When a country is in

a dangerous situation, what a dance can do is to provide its people with comfort, uplift, and strength (cited in Wen, 1981:190–191).

Indeed, Lin and his Cloud Gate Dance Theater had embarked on their journey to search for Taiwanese national consciousness, identity and spirit long before 1978. Their endeavors through dance were an integral part of the surge of Taiwanese nationalism after World War II. Susan Manning asserts that "...nationalism involves imagined connections between the individual body and the collective body" (1993:28–29). Her conclusion reflects certain truths. As Lin later describes,

On the surface, it's a work honoring our ancestors. In reality, I think it portrays how a group of young dancers [were] working together and looking for an identity, [and] what fierce energy and determination we put in. And of course it's important for Taiwan (Mimeo Films Ltd., 2005).

The development and role of cultural nationalism in Taiwan

We believe that the activity of Cloud Gate Dance Theater was the artistic and cultural expression of Taiwanese nationalism at a time when political action designed to forward Taiwanese nationalism was impossible. Some scholars see traditional Chinese nationalism as "cultural nationalism" (Duara, 1966) or "a pre-modern nationalism" (Hutchinson, 1994). They believe that some pre-modern forms of nationalism existed in China as early as the period of the Qin-Han unification (Akzin, 1964:181–182; Kai, 1999:124; Smith, 1971:Ch. 7; Townsend, 1996:8). We agree that cultural nationalism developed simultaneously with the victimization of the indigenous Taiwanese consciousness, which occurred from the outset, especially after the Qing government ceded Taiwan to Japan in 1895. The mission of Cloud Gate is unique in terms of its implicit effort to cultivate the cultural nationalism that fermented later political nationalism, and the creation of *Legacy* marks the initiation of this mission.

The establishment of the Zheng Chenggong regime in Taiwan in the early 1660s, many scholars agree, represents the initiation of the nationalism of Taiwan. Zheng's nationalism was based on the ethnicity and culture of mainland China, and many of his poems and public statements, as well as those by his associates, became the so-called Zheng literature (Chen, 1998:23–47), the discourse of early Taiwanese cultural nationalism. Zheng Chenggong once claimed himself "a Confucian yesterday but an orphan official today!" (Chen, 1993:45–46). Ever since, the seed of the victim consciousness of an abandoned "orphan" was in the Taiwanese mind. After Manchu troops took back Taiwan in 1683, Taiwan was mostly occupied by immigrants from mainland China, who identified themselves with their hometowns in the mainland (Huang, 1999; Jiang, 1999:291–293; Mendel, 1970:12–15;

Shepherd, 1999:124–128). If these new immigrants felt less isolated from mainland China than their predecessors, the Treaty of Shimonoseki in 1895 made them feel the same—like abandoned “orphans.” Many Taiwanese revolted and resisted (Chen, 1993:248–249, 254, 281–298; Wang, 1985:15–16), but they were all eventually suppressed by the Japanese authority in Taiwan by 1915. The Japanese also began to impose a program of acculturation upon the Taiwanese people, forcing them to give up their Chinese language and customs and take on Japanese culture.

Given this circumstance, cultural resistance or cultural nationalism became the last resort of the Taiwanese nationalists. Many of the Taiwanese elite tried to keep using the Chinese language and organized about 200 Chinese poetry clubs with the goal of preserving and developing Chinese literature and culture. The number of private schools increased from 1,227 in 1897 to 1,707 in 1898, and the number of students at private schools grew from 17,066 to 29,941 during the same period (Chen, 1993:383–384; Huang, 1999:16, 21; Peng, 1995:19; Yin, 1987:117). In 1921, the Cultural Association of Taiwan (CAT, *Taiwan wenhua xiehui*) was established, aiming to “arouse the Han people’s national consciousness and fight against the Japanese suppression of the Han people.” In 1922, the elite of Taiwan launched a movement to promote the vernacular language in opposition to the use of the Japanese language (Chen, 1993:344–352; Ye, 1987:161).

Heartbroken by the Treaty of Shimonoseki, some of the Taiwanese elite began to seek new cultural strength and spirit for a possible new Taiwanese identity. In the 1930s, the elite and nationalists of Taiwan began to cultivate Taiwanese indigenous cultural power and advocate for nativist literature (*xiangtu wenxue*) of Taiwan as a means to continue their resistance against Japanese colonist rule and to promote the independence of Taiwan. Huang Shihui published his article, “Why not advocate for nativist literature?” in three sequential issues of the newspaper *Five People* (*Wurenbao*), beginning on August 16, 1930 (Liao, 1995). Nativist literature became a realistic method to enlighten the masses of Taiwan and prevent Taiwan from becoming culturally extinct under Japanese colonization (Liao, 1995). In 1932, Ye Rongzhong invented his theory of the “Third Literature.” He claimed that, as a result of the double influence from China and Japan, Taiwan had become an independent cultural entity whose characteristics were unique and distinct from both. This theory gained much support among intellectuals and became a guiding theory applied in many fields. Also in 1932, the Association for the Research of Arts in Taiwan (ARAT, *Taiwan yishu yanjiu xiehui*) was established in Tokyo. The ARAT began to issue its journal, *Formosa*, which announced its goal to “collect, compile, and study folklore, folk songs, and nativist arts, . . . to restore and create the genuine arts of the Taiwanese” (Ye, 1987:106). In 1933, Lian Hen completed *The Language Dictionary of Taiwan* (*Taiwan yudian*), a huge project in four volumes, in order to preserve Taiwanese literacy and culture. Li Xianzhang spent almost three years on *The Collection of Taiwanese Folklore* (*Taiwan minjian wexueji*), completed in 1936 (Chen, 1998:121). In 1934, Taiwan’s Alliance for Literature and Arts (TALA, *Taiwan wenyi lianmeng*) and its journal, *The Literature and Arts of Taiwan* (*Taiwan*

wenyi), were established. The TALA urged intellectuals to study the unique environment, economy, politics, customs and history of Taiwan, so that Taiwanese literature would find a right way to develop from nowhere (Zhang, 1935). In 1934, the famous writer Yang Kui created another journal, *The New Literature of Taiwan* (*Taiwan xinwenxue*) (You, 1996:56–58). The advocacy and activities for promoting nativist literacy, literature and arts marked the reemergence of Taiwanese cultural nationalism in the 1930s.

Japanese control of Taiwan for half a century eventually ended with World War II in 1945, making the people of Taiwan extremely happy. Soon, their cultural and ethnic identity with mainland China, though it had faded in the past, resurged. Almost every household in Taiwan raised a Chinese national flag at the door upon hearing the news of the Japanese surrender. Many people in Taiwan spontaneously started to study Mandarin, feeling very proud to be able to speak the language of China. Many Taiwanese people felt their return to China as “blood flows back to the heart of the five thousand years of culture and history” (Ye, 1997:24). But to their dismay, the Nationalist government that took Taiwan treated the Taiwanese people as Japan’s subjects and culturally discriminated against them, believing that the Japanese colonists “spread a lot of poisoning elements which influenced and numbed the Taiwanese...who unconsciously developed a psychology of low self-esteem and worshipping Japan” (“Eliminate poisoning elements in mind” [“Suqing sixiang dusu”], editorial, *New Life*, December 17, 1946). They endeavored to eliminate the Japanese influence among the Taiwanese and to reverse almost everything that the Japanese had done to them (Chen and Chen, 1989:I, 94–95). The Nationalists’ distrust of the Taiwanese reached its peak on February 28, 1947, during which many Taiwanese writers and scholars mysteriously disappeared or were murdered or arrested and put in jail by the Nationalist authority (Peng, 1995:105).

As Chen Fangming concluded, the February 28 incident initiated the Taiwanese “search for sovereignty and cultural reconstruction” of Taiwan, as well as “the Taiwanese new national identity” (Chen, 1991:13), which was launched under the disguise of an intense debate over Chinese and Western cultures. In the 1950s, many of the Taiwanese elite tried to distance themselves from the politicized and utilitarian anti-Communist literature and indulge themselves in Western literature and arts as a passive means to resist the tight censorship of the Nationalist government (Zhong, 1976:48). Hu Shi, Lei Zhen, Ji Xuan and “the Modern School,” which was formally established at the first conference of modern poets in 1956, advocated a total westernization of China and “horizontal transplantation”—worship and adaptation of Western theories and culture—and rejected “vertical inheritance” (anti-tradition). On the other hand, in response to the Modern School and liberalists, Xu Fuguan and Zhang Peijie created the journal *Democratic Comments* (*Minzhu pinglun*) (Xu, 1985), criticizing the views of total westernization and swearing that “we are all those who love and protect Chinese culture with all the strength of life.... As long as our nation lives, the culture of China will survive” (Xu, 1980:149).

Chinese Magazine (*Zhonghua zazhi*), established by Hu Qiuyuan in 1963, and two other journals, *Taiwan Literature and Arts* (*Taiwan wenyi*) and *Li* poetry magazine, founded in 1964, became the forum of the Anti-Westernization School, which led to a call for cultivation of Taiwanese nativist culture and the development of Taiwanese nativism (*bentuhua*) (Chen, 1998:158). *The Newsletter of Literate Friends* (*Wenyou tongxun*), established by Zhong Zhaozheng, survived for only 16 issues, from April 1957 to September 1958, but became a spiritual source and emotional support for those who were determined to serve as “the pioneers for Taiwanese literature” (Zhong, 1976:124, 1998:17). The spirit of *The Newsletter* and the movement for nativist literature further developed in the 1960s, evidenced by the creation of such journals as *The Arts of Taiwan* (1964), *Bamboo Hat* (1964) and *Literature Quarterly* (1966).

Clearly, due to the forceful and brutal political suppression exercised by both the Japanese authority and the Nationalist government in Taiwan since 1895, the nationalist movement of Taiwan mostly took the form of cultural nationalism. The development of nativist literature and culture in Taiwan during the 1950s and 1960s ushered in a new phase of Taiwanese cultural nationalism.

Lin Hwai-min: The pioneer of Taiwan’s modern dance

The movement for nativist literature and Taiwanese cultural nationalism during the 1950s and 1960s was the historical backdrop against which Lin Hwai-min realized the urgent call of the era and the society. It was also during this period of time that Lin’s view of life and the world matured. Engaging with prominent writers, Lin was involved with the movement for nativist literature. He could not but ponder how to meet the challenge of the time and solve the identity crisis of the Taiwanese people. In addition, as a result of his family’s teachings and the education he received during his childhood, Lin developed a deeply rooted social consciousness and sense of responsibility. This conviction and sense of social obligation began to surface, planting the seeds of the role he would play in the cultivation of Taiwanese national identity and the promotion of Taiwanese cultural nationalism.

Lin was born to a family of prominent and well-respected scholars and dedicated public servants at the New Port (Hsinkang) of Taiwan. To the Lin family, there is no greater virtue than to serve society. His great-grandfather Lin Wei-chao was a poet and learned man, as well as a successful businessman who filled many jobs in the public service sector of the community. When his eldest son, Lin Lanya, began to serve as head of the New Port area, he wrote the new head four big words: “Put service above self” (*Gong er wang si*), which eventually became the motto of the Lin family. Lin Jinsheng, Lin Hwai-min’s father, was a politician who took quite a few important government posts, such as the Magistrate of Jiayi County and Yunlin County, the Minister of Communication, the Minister of the Interior, Vice

President of the Examination Yuan, member of the Standing Committee of the Kuomintang Central Committee and senior adviser to the President of Taiwan. He often challenged his children intellectually through various conversations on social issues, which, along with the family motto, deeply rooted these values in their consciousness and would surface in their actions when they grew up (Mimeo Films Ltd., 2005; Yang, 2003:51).

When Lin Hwai-min was young, he rebelliously chose a life path very different from that which was expected and designed by his family. His desire to pursue the arts, though this was a path that deeply contrasted those that were taken by the rest of his family, is not surprising considering the environment established by his parents. Lin was raised in “a home that was a curious mix of Taiwanese, Japanese, and Chinese in its ethos” (“Biography of Lin Hwai-Min,” 1999), one that was infused with music, as his mother played recordings of folk songs, operas and symphonies to her children after school every day. Lin loved music and movies. One day, he watched the film *Red Shoes* and “...fell madly in love with dancing, jumping up and down and striking various strange poses” (Yang, 2003:28). However, due to the strong pull of service placed on him by his family, he could only channel his energy and talent into literature, and he began to devote himself to writing. At 14, he published his first short story, “Children folk songs,” in the *United Daily News*, one of the country’s most popular newspapers. Using the payment for his story, he purchased a ticket and attended a performance by the José Limón Dance Company, an American group touring in Taiwan. He then registered in a dance class. At 18, Lin signed up as a contracted writer for *Crown*, one of Taiwan’s most prominent magazines. By the age of 22, Lin was already a well-known author (Mimeo Films Ltd., 2005; Yang, 2003:17, 72–74). He confessed that “...[my inability] to become a dancer made me saddest. To evade this reality, I buried myself in writing...in order to forgive myself for not being able to become a dancer” (cited in Yang, 2006:20).

Thus, reading and writing and associating with poets, writers and artists laid a foundation for Lin’s future success on stage. His literary work and activities made him fully aware of the social and political problems of Taiwan and keen on how to solve them (“Biography of Lin Hwai-Min,” 1999). In the 1950s, Lin read every issue of *Free China* edited by Lei Zhen, which played a critical role in promoting democracy during the early Nationalist rule over Taiwan. When Lin studied at National Chengchi University at the outskirts of Taipei, he immersed himself in literature and related activities and became a frequent visitor to Star Coffee, the earliest literati salon in Taipei, where many well-known writers and novelists, such as Bai Xianyong, Chen Yingzhen and Huang Chunming, often showed up to meet and write. Lin considered himself “a graduate from Star Coffee” (Yang, 2003:108). He recalled,

During the 1960s, Chen Yingzhen, Bai Xianyong, Huang Chunming, Wang Zhenhe [and] Wang Wenxing continuously published great lasting works in a short period of several years, like exploding fireworks. They nourished,

stimulated and encouraged me, who lacked self-confidence (cited in Yang, 2003:109).

Obviously, Lin was greatly influenced by Taiwan's nativist literature and culture in the 1950s and 1960s and was part of the nationalist movement in the form of nativist literature before he became a dancer. His later artistic pursuit of Taiwan's cultural identity was a continuation of his involvement in Taiwanese cultural nationalism.

In 1969, Lin was awarded a fellowship at the prestigious University of Iowa's International Writing Program. It was during his stay at that university that he was able to find his true "love"—dance. He "spent more time in the studio than at the typewriter" ("Biography of Lin Hwai-Min," 1999) and not only took courses in modern dance at the university, but also traveled to New York City to take classes at the Martha Graham School of Contemporary Dance and the Merce Cunningham Dance Studio.

His three-year stay in the United States opened Lin's eyes. These years also included several major international setbacks for Taiwan. In September 1970, the U.S. ignored the territorial rights of China, as well as Taiwan, and decided to turn over the disputed territories, the Ryukyu and Diaoyu Islands, to Japan. This gave rise to a surge of Taiwanese nationalism and the "Protecting Diaoyu Island" Movement within and outside of Taiwan. In 1971, the United Nations abandoned Taiwan. Next year, China and the U.S. announced the Shanghai communiqué after Nixon's visit to Beijing, which acknowledged the People's Republic of China, as well as that there is only one China and that Taiwan is part of China. Then, Japan also recognized Communist China. As a result, Taiwan lost its status as a sovereign nation in the world community and became an orphan not only of Asia, but also of the entire world. This was tantamount to a psychological earthquake to the people of Taiwan and led to an unprecedented national crisis.

During the "Protecting Diaoyu Island" Movement, Lin was swept by the tide of youth movements in the U.S. and around the world. "The entire society and world of the 1960s," he recollected, "made the youth feel hopeful and capable of changing the world!" "I was in America," he exclaimed, "and of course saw the possibility [of making changes] as well" (cited in Yang, 2006:39–40). Encouraged by the spirit of the world's youth, Lin joined, along with a group of Chinese people from Iowa, the "Protecting Diaoyu Island" Movement gathering held in Chicago in the spring of 1971. On October 25, Lin heard the news that Taiwan was removed from the United Nations. He was stunned for a few minutes; his "heart was planted with rocks." As the German critic, John Smith, describes, Lin "felt he should repay his own nation, the society that had fostered and had educated him" (cited in Yang, 2006:43). At that moment, all the teachings and admonitions by his parents during his childhood suddenly came back. "During my sojourn in the U.S.," Lin recalled, "Taiwan was kicked out of the United Nations. So, quite a few students rushed home [and] tried to contribute. I was one of them" (Mimeo Films Ltd., 2005).

Lin's original Cloud Gate Dance Theater and its female members

When Lin Hwai-min formed Cloud Gate Dance Theater, he was the indisputable leader, but there was also a driving force behind him: the company's female members. It was a group of senior women students from the Dance Department of Chinese Culture University who went with Lin to the U.S. Lincoln Center News Bureau in Taipei on February 29, 1973, to present the company's first lecture/demonstration of modern dance. This lecture/demonstration initiated the transformation of this dance group from an immature art-performing team into a mature and noteworthy performance art force with certain political and social purpose in Taiwan. In forming Cloud Gate and setting the stage for the company's work to play an active part in creating a national Taiwanese identity, Lin's strong influence produced a generation of dancers for whom modern dance became a truly unique means with which to express cultural, historical and societal themes in an independent manner that both contributed to and paralleled a certain independence in Taiwan.

In the early years, the dancers who worked alongside Lin were primarily women; there were six female dancers and two male dancers in the original Cloud Gate Company. The women who formed the first company were a major underlying force of the era. They did more than dance for Cloud Gate. They worked side by side with Lin and contributed significantly to the development of the company's choreography (Wang, 1997).

Lin was so overwhelmed by his many duties of teaching, choreographing, dress designing, rehearsing, advertising and other administrative duties that he often left the studio on Xinyi Road. At times like these, it was three female dancers—Cheng Shu-gi, He Hui-chen and Wu Hsiu-lien—who firmly held the ground and worked on even though they faced pressures from work, family, the economic burden and society. Cheng's mother was highly traditional and could not accept her involvement in modern dance. She admonished her daughter, "I don't know what you are dancing. Dressed in tight clothes and held closely by a man!" She ordered Cheng to return home immediately. "I cried to death," Cheng recalled, "because I thought the good time was over." Nevertheless, Cheng managed to continue to go to the dance studio to work with the company, traveling by bus from her home in Chilung every day. This was difficult, because she usually did not head for home until the late evening; she was often very tired and had to stand during the trip (cited in Yang, 2006:65–67). What was the driving force that inspired her despite this daily ordeal? Besides her love for dance and the arts (Cheng Shu-gi, interview, December 18, 2007), there was something more. It was only after she performed *Legacy* for the first time that Cheng understood her need to continue working under such difficult conditions. Cheng wrote in her journal later about the day of the premiere:

Very tired and very excited. I could not fall asleep. I have been pregnant for two months and I still rehearsed and performed with exhaustion and tears. The audience was aroused to a high emotional response. After the final curtain fell, nobody wanted to leave, so we sang folk songs in high emotion with the audience. Mr. Lin talked through the microphone: "Let us stand up, hand in hand. I believe we should stand up by ourselves, just like our ancestors did." *Legacy* made the audience and dancers cry. This piece had a very moving and consoling effect on people. The dancers devoted all the mental and physical energy they could muster for their society. Even I could not stop crying. I am glad that I am a dancer, a useful person. I hope the baby in my stomach could feel the spirit of *Legacy*... (Cheng, 1989:48).

Aside from social and familial pressures, the female dancers bore economic burdens as well. Cheng had to take care of the accounts for her family's fishing business. He Hui-chen was working as a member of the art team at the Ministry of Defense, and her family depended on her monthly salary from the military. Lin always gave his salary from teaching at National Chengchi University to the dance studio to pay these women and cover the daily expenses of the company, but they refused to touch the money. To cut costs, they slept in the dance studio, where they also practiced, rehearsed, ate, wrote and had meetings during the day. Many years later, Lin recollected, it was the perseverance and indomitable spirit of these three women that inspired him to go on. As described in the 1974 October issue of *Women Magazine*, which used a photograph of the three dancers for its cover page, "Offstage, do they not show extraordinary appearance and fashionable dress. Among the masses, none of them would be noticed. Onstage, however, they are shining stars, and they are more proud than peacocks when they talk about dance" (Yang, 2006:69).

Not all of the influential women of Cloud Gate at this time were dancers. Wen Hui-wen, a student and staff member of Cloud Gate who became manager of the company in the 1990s, is called "a woman who is married to Cloud Gate." She quit a job as an accountant with a monthly salary of more than \$10,000 (Taiwan currency) to join Cloud Gate. Upon hearing this news, her father almost beat her, but Wen followed her mother's words—"You could have no ambition, but you must have a heart of trying"—and did not change her mind. She did all kinds of errands in the beginning, such as serving tea, sweeping floors, delivering mail, collecting newspaper clippings, ordering lunch boxes and carrying stage equipment. Then she began to take care of ticket sales. Eventually, she became in charge of all the administrative activity of Cloud Gate (Yang, 2006:105–108).

Although Lin is a male leading the development of modern dance in Taiwan, women are the main force behind it. As a relatively young performance art in Taiwan, modern dance has experienced significant growth since its inception. Through its development, this unique art form has found its way into Taiwan's performance and educational arenas. Similar to the method by which modern dance

was organized into the American educational system, Taiwan's version was originally established in the field of physical education. Early training was grounded in simple locomotor movements and influenced by traditional Japanese and Chinese esthetics. Though pioneering modern dance in America emphasized the language of movement and the expression of each individual dancer, Taiwan's evolving form was relatively limited in terms of its artistic expression and characteristics. This was largely due to the way politics governed the progress and rationale of the arts in Taiwan. The primary purpose of early modern dance in Taiwan was to provide exercise for youth and to reinforce and enhance important Taiwanese events, as determined by the government, through choreographic work. To this end, dances were constructed so that the dancers would move as a large, supportive and unified group, a tactic inspired by Rudolf Laban's movement choirs.

The first generation of Cloud Gate dancers was impeccably trained in modern dance and ballet. They were also trained in Chinese esthetics and history, T'ai Chi and meditation. With these dancers, Lin created epic works, such as *Legacy*, that spoke volumes of Taiwan's ancestral history. Lin orchestrated the setting for creating these early Cloud Gate dances such that the dancers experienced hardship first hand: he took them to the countryside to create the work. Here, they were invited to articulate their family's histories, thereby connecting directly to their Taiwanese descent and identity (Wang, 1995:314). This training and these experiences produced a distinctive generation of dancers.

Their contributions extend far beyond Cloud Gate. Eighty percent of the first generation's dancers became leading choreographers, teachers and policy makers of Taiwan's current dance field. In conjunction with Lin, this generation eventually directed the development of dance curricula in the subsequent generation—dance training that maintained an emphasis on modern dance, ballet and Chinese opera movement (Chou, 1995:284). As members of Cloud Gate, this generation had the opportunity to study with many foreign guest artists as they toured abroad throughout Asia, the U.S. and Canada. Since modern dance is relatively young in Taiwan, foreign study was considered a valuable and desired experience. Sixty percent of Cloud Gate's first generation studied abroad, thus creating relationships and a standard for the next generation to sustain.

Notwithstanding their experiences abroad and experimentation with various dance approaches and trends, many of Cloud Gate's first generation maintained an obligation to sustain Chinese culture and history in their creative work. Their dances were likely to connote a certain style that, either directly or indirectly, reflected traditional values associated with Chinese culture and identity. This was not true of the following generation of choreographers. Even if some of the first-generation choreographers shifted the overall esthetic of their dances, it would be considered minimal in comparison to the work of the current generation.

This raises the question of what direction the new generation of dancers would pursue: What were their visions and ambitions? Did they, like the generations that preceded them, feel an obligation to present Chinese history, culture and esthetics in

their work? In the U.S., second-generation and postmodern dance makers openly rebelled against the codified rigidity of pioneering modern dance esthetics, such as those determined by Martha Graham. If Lin Hwai-min was Taiwan's equivalent to America's Martha Graham, who was Taiwan's Cunningham, Tharp or Morris? Was there room for a quiet revolution against the weight of Chinese history? Where would modern dance go in Taiwan and how would it contribute to the development of Taiwanese cultural nationalism and the search for a national identity of Taiwan?

The role of modern dance: Search for identity

If internal elements fostered the development of Taiwanese cultural nationalism in the 1950s and 1960s, external events stimulated the surge of Taiwanese nationalism in the 1970s, the decade that witnessed a series of crises of national identity in Taiwan. The loss of a seat in the United Nations profoundly affected Taiwanese perception of Taiwan's position in the world and therefore the search for national identity. How should Taiwan continue to identify itself as a nation and define the Taiwanese nationality? How would the Taiwanese people, and artists in particular, redefine Taiwan's position in the world? The initial Taiwanese response to this crisis came from writers contributing to *The Journal of University* (*Daxue zazhi*), as well as the so-called new nationalists who were anti-West and "anti-imperialism." They believed that the unification of China and Taiwan would be the best means for anti-imperialism, and brought the two slogans of "anti-imperialism" and "unification" from overseas to Taiwan during the Symposium on Nationalism sponsored by National Taiwan University in December 1972 (You, 1996:194–195, 236–240). To them, Chinese culture and history, and the spirit of the May Fourth Movement and Chinese nationalism in particular, were their rich spiritual source, and their nationalist activities were a logical extension of Chinese nationalism. However, Taiwanese nationalists—many of whom were nativist writers and the new generation of politicians and intellectuals, including Zhang Junhong, Xu Xinliang, Huang Xinjie and Kang Ningxiang—strongly opposed these ideas, and refused to identify Taiwan with Chinese history and culture. They established *Political Critics of Taiwan* (*Taiwan zhenlun*) in 1975 as their platform and aimed at promoting the reform of Taiwan, criticizing, in the form of novels, the view of the new nationalists that ignored and discriminated against native Taiwanese people, their history and their culture. They endeavored to find the cultural roots of the native Taiwanese—which they believed were distinctly different from Chinese culture—in history, in order to legitimate the political rights of the Taiwanese people for independence (Lu, 1999:27–63).

Obviously, in the process of creating a Taiwanese cultural entity, the Taiwanese elite was split, and the Taiwanese nationalists and nativist writers, as well as their readers, were troubled and confused by the sophisticated and subtle ethnic and

cultural relations between the Taiwanese and the Chinese. Cultural construction is complex. The Taiwanese nationalists and nativist writers had not been successful in redefining Taiwan as an organic entity culturally independent from mainland China because Chinese and Taiwanese cultures were difficult to distinguish. The more the Taiwanese nationalists and nativist writers tried to use cultural and ethnic factors to prove the necessity of separating Taiwan from mainland China, the more they were trapped in an inseparable ethnic and cultural net between the two (Chen Shuyi, 1996; Chen Ye, 1989; Dong, 1995; Ku, 1988; Li Qiao, 1995; Li Xiu, 1996; Liu, 1978; Su, 1990; Sun, 1995; Wu, 1996; Xia, 1990; Zhang, 1978; Zhu and Zhu, 1992a, 1992b). As Xu Yonghua admitted,

Even today, if someone is told that his vein is not flowing with Han people's blood, he, including the enthusiastic proponent of the Taiwan's independent movement, will feel discomfort all over his body (Xu, 1996:64).

These are challenging issues that many Taiwanese intellectuals and nationalists, including Lin, faced. As early as the summer of 1978, Lin predicted that Taiwan was heading towards a crisis. He met with Taiwanese journalist Lan Liang and told him,

The situation of our country is very difficult today. "How should we do something for our nation?", I often ask myself. Now I see that everyone has his/her limit, but we could at least truly offer our heart and effort from our own position (cited in Yang, 2006:124).

That is why it is neither a surprise nor a coincidence that Lin put *Legacy* onstage the same day that the U.S. severed its diplomatic relations with Taiwan.

At that time, however, Lin could not draw spirit, strength and courage for his choreography from sources other than Chinese traditional culture to help the people of Taiwan deal with the international crisis they faced in the 1970s. Initially, the mission of Cloud Gate, as well its cultural, spiritual and artistic source, came from mainland China and Chinese civilization. On February 29, 1973, after his group's performance at the U.S. Lincoln Center News Bureau on Nanhai Road to a Taiwanese audience, Lin, with tears in his eyes, expressed his dream of serving China's future and achieving a renaissance that he believed China needed (Yang, 2006:48). In April, Lin rented a room above a noodle shop on Xinyi Road in Taipei as a dance studio to start training his students. This was the beginning of Cloud Gate Dance Theater. Lin established the mission of the group as dance that was "...composed by Chinese, choreographed by Chinese, danced by Chinese for Chinese audiences." The next month, calligrapher Dong Yangzi wrote "Cloud Gate Dance Theater" as the name for the dance group and it became official (*The United Literature*, 1987). "Cloud Gate," a phrase Lin found in the Chinese classic *Lüshi*

Chunqiu (Lü's *Spring and Autumn*) (Yang 2006:57), is the name of an ancient ritual dance created at the dawn of Chinese civilization. It is of the highest order of *Da Wu* (The Greater Dances), a category of ancient ritual dance associated with the Yellow Emperor, the alleged common ancestor of the Chinese people, and employed in major rituals and in the education of young noblemen during the Chou Dynasty (Chao, 2001:172).

The first production of Cloud Gate was *Butterfly Dream* (Mengdie, 1971), choreographed and performed by Lin, a story written by the famous ancient Chinese philosopher and Taoist, Zhuang Zi. Other early productions of Cloud Gate—including *Landscape* (Fengjing, 1973), *Wu Long Yuan* (Wulongyuan, 1973), *Cold Food* (Hanshi, 1974), *Leisure* (Xianqing, 1974), *Li Bai's Three Poems on Night* (Li Bai yeshi sanshou, 1974), *Red Child* (Nazha, 1974), *Revenge of A Lonely Ghost* (Qiyuanbao, 1974), *The Red Kerchief* (Daijianiang, 1974), *Eight Sergeants* (Bajiajiang, 1974), *Tail of the White Serpent* (Baishezhuang, 1975), *Looking Forward* (Zhanwang, 1976), *Wu Song Kills the Tiger* (Wusong dahu, 1976), *Suite of Folk Songs* (Xiangtu zuqu, 1977) and others—all absorbed the elements of Peking opera, poetry and folk stories of China. As Lin confessed, "...when I returned to Taiwan I was full of enthusiasm hoping to integrate Chinese tradition with new techniques from the West" (cited in Chao, 2005:13). Lin and his Cloud Gate members gained considerable knowledge from their "spiritual teacher," the master of Chinese culture and erudite dramatist, Yu Dagang (Yang, 2006:69–73), who helped them infuse the spirit and culture of Chinese civilization into their early products.

During the process of producing *Legacy*, Lin took his dance members to experience the life and path of their ancestors by rehearsing on the wild and stony shore of Xindian Creek for two months in order to discover a new path, tracing the cultural roots and history of their ancestors as immigrants. Yet, what they found and relied upon was mainly Chinese culture. One of the authors of this paper, Yunyu Wang, was one of the founding members of Cloud Gate. She remembers Cloud Gate's premiere of *Legacy* in Chai-yi:

National and ethnic pride was written on the faces of the tearful performers as we told the story of the early settlers to an audience that understood the long struggle of occupation by the Dutch, the Spanish and the Japanese.... One by one, we shed our contemporary clothing to reveal traditional peasant garments. We began the same voyage that our ancestors completed when they landed at Chai-Yi, united as one people. Forgotten for that moment was the conflict between China and Taiwan; we were one (Frangione and Wang, 2004:4).

As Chen Fangming comments,

The early Cloud Gate work was full of Chinese symbols. Performance as such was entirely limited by the environment of the time. Maybe Lin Hwai-

min's inability to represent Taiwan was a sorrowful and unavoidable expression of the time (cited in Chao, 2005:15).

Zhu Yaoyuan also concludes that "Taiwan has developed the substantial body and social consciousness of an independent nation, but it is still fraught with strong emotional ties with mainland China" (Mainlanders' United Association for the Independence and Progress of Taiwan, 1995:219).

The dilemma in constructing Taiwanese identity

As the political environment began to change in the 1980s, the movement of Taiwanese cultural nationalism in the form of dance also turned in another direction. After the Nationalist government relaxed its control of the society, many Taiwanese nationalists steered their focus from cultural debate to the political revolution in order to solve their cultural dilemma. In the spring of 1984, the journals *Tribune of Summer Tide*, *Taiwan Era* (*Taiwan Niandai*) and *The Eighties* (*Bashi niandai*) published many articles written by nativist writers, arguing that after 300 years, Taiwan had become a community of all the Taiwanese inhabitants independently of mainland China. While the ideological and cultural differences between mainland immigrants and native inhabitants in Taiwan had been significantly reduced, Taiwanese literature developed within a society entirely separated from mainland China. Based on the principle of "self-determination by the inhabitants," the nativist writers argued, Taiwan's right to independence was legitimate (You, 1996:248–249, 334–335).

Thus, during this period, the main development of Taiwanese nationalism was in the political realm: from the formation of a nationwide network of the non-Nationalist Party in 1977 to their election victories in five public positions (Lu, 1999:45), the establishment of the journals *The Eighties* and *Beautiful Formosa* (*Meilidao*), and eventually the *Beautiful Formosa* Incident on December 10, 1979. The *Beautiful Formosa* Incident was the watershed in the history of the Taiwanese nationalist movement: the rising force of political nationalism suddenly overrode the growth of cultural nationalism in Taiwan. The Nationalist white terror policy had again broken the heart of the people of Taiwan and added enormous fuel to the development of Taiwanese political nationalism. At that point many Taiwanese people felt that civic and human rights were more basic to them than a cultural identity. This civic concept and modern consciousness became the new major element in Taiwanese nationalism and gave birth to the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), which would soon be the major political force for the independence of Taiwan. In 1987, after martial law was lifted, about 100,000 people marched in the streets, requesting the independence of Taiwan and the freedom of the people of Taiwan. The DPP announced its "April 17" statement claiming the independence

and sovereignty of Taiwan in 1988 and passed its “Party’s Constitution for Taiwan’s Independence” in 1991 (You, 1996:260–261).

All these events demonstrated that the political feature of the nationalism of Taiwan now overshadowed its cultural feature. Yet, as Kai Nielsen points out, “all nationalisms are cultural nationalisms of one kind or another” (Kai, 1999:127). A truly national identity has to develop from, and rely upon, an organic and cultural entity compatible with it and supportive of it. In fact, the incomplete development of democratization of an organic entity of Taiwan, as well as the lasting and powerful cultural tie between Taiwan and China, called for a new role of cultural nationalism in completing the construction or reconstruction of Taiwanese culture. Taiwanese cultural nationalism, as a moral innovator, would have to revive “an ethnic historicist vision of the nation to redirect traditionalists and modernists away from conflict and unite them in the task of constructing an integrated distinctive and autonomous community” (Smith, 1998:178).

That is exactly the challenge Lin took upon himself. As early as 1976, he launched his movement of nativist choreography. According to Zhan Hong-zhi, the early products of Cloud Gate, such as *The Little Drummer* (Xiaogushou, 1976), *Wu Fong* (Wufeng, 1976) and *Legacy*, all contained Taiwanese vernacular themes and elements (Zhan, 1985), and *Liao Tien-ting* (1979) was a story about a popular Taiwanese Robin Hood. *One Corner of the City* (Doushi yiyu, 1978), *Beautiful New World* (Meili xinshijie, 1982), *Rite of Spring, Taipei, 1984* (Chun zhi jili, Taipei, 1984) and *Summer of 1984, Taipei* (1984xia, Taipei) are all related to Taipei and therefore relate directly to Taiwan rather than China. By 1986, Lin fully realized that

I do love the Yellow River; I do love the Yangtze. When I grew up, I realized that this kind of love is dangerous. It is autistic and unreal, unless I know the Tanshui River [Taiwan] and love the Choshui River [Taiwan] (cited in Chao, 2005:14).

Indeed, the works of Cloud Gate from this time on have demonstrated the search for Taiwanese historical and cultural roots and identity. *Nine Songs* (Jiuge, 1995), *Symphony of the Sorrowful Songs* (Beige jiaoxiangqu, 1995), and *Portrait of the Families* (Jiazu hechang, 1997) refer to Taiwan’s national sorrow and its heroes and heroines. *My Nostalgia, My Songs* (Wode xiangchou, wode ge, 1986), *Song of Plowing* (Niulige, 1991) and *Street Steps* (Shaonianzai, 1992) adopt Taiwanese costumes. *Shooting the Sun* (Sheri, 1992) is based on a myth of a Taiwanese indigenous tribe (Chao, 2005:15–16). Even when *Legacy* was restaged and performed at the Double Tenth R.O.C. National Day Celebration in 1992, the company restaged this classic work “not as celebration of mainland Chinese heritage but as a story of the founding of Taiwan, and thereby a heralding of a specifically Taiwanese nationalism” (Kwan, 2005:108).

Yet, the dilemma Lin and his company faced was the impossibility of severing the cultural and historical ties of Taiwan with mainland China. If the dancers

attempted to reconstruct the national identity of Taiwan by tracing their cultural and historical roots, they would inevitably fall into the trap of Chinese culture. Obviously, many of their shows absorbing Taiwanese cultural and historical elements also contained Chinese cultural and historical ingredients. *Eight Sergeants, Legacy, The Little Drummer, Nine Songs* and *Shooting the Sun* all had their Chinese originality, reference or association. Thus, Lin and Cloud Gate expanded the horizon and dimension of their experiments far beyond Chinese and Taiwanese cultures, trying to incorporate not only Taiwanese, but also Indian and Balinese indigenous elements into its dances like *Wu Fong, Liao Tien-Ting, Street Game* (Jiejing, 1982), *Dreamscape* (Xiangmeng, 1985), *Nine Songs* and *Portrait of the Families*. Lin attempted to make and choreograph the cultural uniqueness of modern Taiwan by absorbing various cultural elements and crossing cultural borders. He believed that

Dance communicates to everybody. It has a universal power of communicating that really breaks the boundary of cultures. However, all the movements have connotation. I just don't believe there is not such a thing called international dance language (Mimeo Films Ltd., 2005).

Thus, as Chao Yu-ling analyzes,

A picture of diasporic culture is suggested through the creation of the Cloud Gate repertoire. Graham contemporary vocabularies, ballet, Peking opera movements, Tai Chi movements and Indonesian dance movements are integrated into the choreography. Chinese and Japanese traditional music, compositions by Stravinsky and Mahler, Han Taiwanese and Taiwanese indigenous tribes songs are used for the dance music. Han Taiwanese paintings, Chinese calligraphy, Japanese and Taiwanese indigenous props are used to decorate the stage. Chinese legendary figures, Han Taiwanese heroes and Taiwanese indigenous characters are portrayed in Cloud Gate's dances. The repertoire, as a whole, is a synthesis of Chinese, Western, Han Taiwanese indigenous and Asian cultures. The result is a repertoire that is neither Chinese nor Western, neither traditional nor modern. It is a distinctively Taiwanese phenomenon, reflecting Taiwanese culture through the transformation of dance (Chao, 2001:177).

This is actually a Taiwanese survival strategy because, as Shu-mei Shih points out, "in view of tensions with China, for Taiwan to have an increasingly globalized economy is to keep ahead of the development game, and to have a more globalized culture is to displace Sinocentric influence and invent new forms of trans-culture" (Shih, 2003:146). Lin must have been aware of the importance of trans-culture, as he made an effort to partake of many non-Chinese and non-Taiwanese heritages as well

as “an ethnic Sino-Chinese heritage without having to be part of China” (Shih, 2003:149).

This new and right direction that Taiwanese cultural nationalism and Cloud Gate has taken reveals that Lin probably, consciously or unconsciously, sensed that the challenge and dilemma that Taiwan faced came partially from globalization. Some scholars believe that globalization means the end of nationalism, as national boundaries are no longer as significant, but others view globalization as working hand in hand with nation-states, subtly substituted for “inter/nationalism”—the other side of nationalism (Iwabuchi, 1994). Both of these theories apply to Taiwan. Lin Yatin proposes that, in this age of globalization, Taiwan has become a major Chinese-speaking global place. Meanwhile it continues to firmly maneuver with a great degree of flexibility for its official recognition as a nation-state, while in a time of transnational capitalism and mass flow of people, goods and information, the function of the nation-state seems no longer as prominent as before (Lin, 2005:93). Thus, Lin Yatin claims, “Cloud Gate is incorporating the strategic use of flexibility in its march onto international concert stages” (Lin, 2005:99). Flexibility or “flexible citizenship” is a concept introduced by economists to describe the flexible accumulation in late twentieth-century economic models that values mobility, elasticity, adaptability and pliancy in the age of globalization. A similar concept at use is “flow,” such as the flow of workers, capital and information, or “diversity,” which emphasizes acceptance, tolerance and interactions between cultures. These concepts may characterize the new direction and strategy of Cloud Gate and Taiwanese cultural nationalism in response to the challenge of globalization (Lin, 2005:98–103). Indeed, the latest products of Cloud Gate, such as *Moon Water* (Shuiyue, 1998) and *Cursive Trilogy* (*Cursive*, *Wild Cursive*, *Cursive II*) (*Xingchao sanbuqu*: *Xingchao*, *Kuangchao*, *Xingchao II*, 2001, 2003, 2005), do not touch any sensitive political and social issues of Taiwan, but emphasize the importance of relaxation, a result of practicing *qi* in Chinese *taiji* movement and calligraphy that guides the body into a free play: flexible, and therefore natural, movement going with flow.

New individual citizens: Female dancers in the post-Cloud Gate era

The strategy of flexibility is not an intended means that can control artistic and social development. The Taiwanese response to the challenges of globalization at the grassroots level took a surprising turn never imagined by the old generation of scholars and thinkers, which, however, greatly corresponded to the latest effort of Lin and Cloud Gate, except that the new generation has gone far further than Lin and his Cloud Gate. In the summer of 2002, almost thirty years after the establishment of Cloud Gate in 1973, a piece of research on Taiwan’s new and young choreographers (ages 30–45) began.¹ The result of the research revealed that

young choreographers were very much looking forward; they expressed little concern for history or politics, and even less for the obligations regarding the past. Like young American choreographers, they were breaking away from the traditions of earlier generations and moving to claim their own approach and identity—a Taiwanese identity. This new generation was more likely to move away from the old obligations to Taiwan's connection with mainland China in the past in order to explore new territories. According to a freelance writer and the former Director of Taipei's Artist Village, Lu Chien-Ying, "[members of] the younger generation don't really think of themselves as Chinese, so [Chinese history and politics are] not a burden to them" (interview, May 25, 2002). These artists, dance critic Pin-Hsiu Chen said, are not "fighting for or leading society" like their predecessors, but, instead, they youthfully reflect it (interview, May 22, 2002). Choreographer and professor of dance at Taipei National University of the Arts, Her Hsaio-Mei, explained that she "does not use the technique of direct expression like Mr. Lin." In her work, she "does not want to show the anger and fighting that are inherent in Taiwan's politics." She continued, "There is no reason to criticize what's there already. One focuses on life, not politics" (interview, May 23, 2002).

Her's statement speaks for the trend that Taiwanese choreographers currently pursue. Like young American dancers, they determinedly look inward, focusing on the daily issues of relationships, economics and time. "Ten years ago, there was a heavy reflection upon society. Today, [choreography] is about daily life. Before, there was fighting, now there is not. All [the new generation] can say is, 'I'm here'" (interview, May 25, 2002). Young choreographers are sourcing from themselves, what they know and their personal lives to create their work.

As they search and find their identity, many leave Taiwan in an effort to gain foreign experience and exposure. Referring to her personal experience, Her explained the need to explore New York City and investigate what artists were doing there, which was outside of her realm of knowledge—the established approach to choreography learned in Taiwan (interview, May 23, 2002). It is a significant experience to learn about what is happening in other dance settings throughout the world and the multiple examples of how dancers are approaching, making and transforming their art. In the U.S., generation after generation of dancers continue to refine and revamp their approach to choreography. Currently, young choreographers speak to the issues of everyday life—a topic found in dance cross-culturally. In Taiwan, the new generation also creates works that deal "more and more with themselves.... They are concerning themselves with what the real life is, who they are" (Ku Ming-Shen, interview, May 27, 2002). As editor and dance critic, Pin-Hsiu Chen, explained, the current choreography is "reflective of personal feeling rather than of issues related with specificity. In the early years of Cloud Gate, there might be some focus on issues, but the new generation is more focused on personal feelings" (interview, May 22, 2002).

Technically, the new generation is no longer merely trained in ballet, Graham and Chinese opera movement like the generation before them. Their experiences have expanded to include postmodern technique, release technique, contact improvisation, pure improvisation, dance and multimedia as well as hip-hop and jazz. Improvisation is a highly valued tool among this generation, as it enables them to actively search for, and eventually solidify, their own style and choreographic voice.

As these choreographers turn towards introspection and daily life for inspiration, they do not shed their heritage and roots. Younger choreographers Ting-Chu Cho and Wen-jinn Luo both use their extensive background training in Chinese folk dance as a resource when developing new and innovative choreography. Cho uses the S-curve to characterize the female dancer's role, and she traces the feature back to her training in Chinese folk dance and her love for that form. As she develops into a contemporary Taiwanese dance artist, she continues to practice and teach Chinese dance and therefore filter it into her modern dance work. She explains that she does not consciously incorporate the Chinese esthetic, but rather her "principle is in creating movement" and her own distinctive language of movement (interview, May 23, 2002).

Similarly, young choreographer Luo uses her extensive background in Chinese folk dance as a resource and inspiration for her choreography, specifically her solo dance *Lotus* (interview, May 21, 2002). Her use of this style is for personal reasons and not necessarily for the sole purpose of producing dance embedded with Chinese esthetics or themes. Instead, she takes advantage of her expertise in this form to further enhance and develop her individual style and movement approach, indirectly affirming her responsibility to Chinese culture. This way of working illuminates how "tradition and modernity are both material for [young choreographers] to create with" (Lin, 1990:167). It does not cast the younger generation as ungrateful or irresponsible, but instead, free of the confines of the past. The new generation is developing a new Taiwanese approach, not reinventing an old one, or a western one. They are in the process of creating a way unique to their evolving identity as Taiwanese, no longer Chinese.

In the last ten years, Taiwanese women were legally granted gender equality—not only the equal right to work, but also full equal rights (Ku and Fan, 2009). With the attribution of this freedom, some believe that "the difference between the sexes has faded" (Lu Chien-Ying, interview, May 25, 2002). Most young female Taiwanese choreographers have not experienced the fight for equality and therefore have not embraced the feminist movement. For many young dancers, feminism has not become an important subject to pursue choreographically. Other choreographers, however, have found that women's issues are great thematic material for choreography. In 1999, Her composed a trio for the Cross-Over Dance Company. In this work she intended to represent three distinct sides of a woman: the outside woman, the inside woman and the spiritual woman. She explained:

Within each woman, there are a tolerance and strength like a man, as well as the softness of a female—and the balance in between. Woman in the office is strong; woman at home is soft. Sometimes there is a conflict [between the two]; sometimes there is the harmony [of the two] (interview, May 23, 2002).

Popular choreographer, Ting-Tsu Jon, has recognized over time a great value inherent in the subject of women and has embraced it with the creation of her work, *Woman*. In six sections, Jon illustrates the inability of women to escape from a fate designed by the implications of their gender (Ting-Tsu Dance Company Press Packet, 2002). Tin-Chu Cho incorporates feminine themes in her work, but admits that she is not purposefully including these elements. In a way, it relates back to the idea that most choreographers of this time create works that speak for their personal experience in life. Cho explained, “Most of my work is about being a woman, but I haven’t focused on this as a subject matter. Most of my choreography is about personal living experience.” Cho added that “because I am female, unconsciously I take on a woman’s point of view [in my work].” Should the audience associate a feminine nature to her work, she would not reject it, but she also does not feel compelled to intentionally represent women in her work (interview, May 23, 2002).

A significant anomaly existent within this generation is choreographer Ondine Hsiao. Hsiao’s artistic mission is to reconstruct and produce the work of her mother-in-law, Tsai Jui-Yueh, a controversial Taiwanese choreographer and Taiwanese modern dance pioneer whose work related to the event of February 28, 1947. In Hsiao’s opinion, the current dance generation is the “generation of nothing,” a group of individuals disconnected from their past. Hsiao explained that Ms. Tsai’s work “is a window to the past for the new generation...and reflects a painful time” (interview, May 24, 2002). She researches and produces this work to inform the new generation of their history. Hsiao’s artistic intent differs greatly from the rest of the new generation.

In sum, the new generation, while seemingly self-focused, works in challenging conditions with little funding to create amazing and innovative work. Their erratic lives, like their viewpoints, are remarkably international and ingenuously individual. They are energetic and fearless, yet practical, both inspiring and infuriating. They are the next generation of female choreographers. The Western or modern ideas of gender equality and the new social system of this kind, along with the pioneer efforts made by such as Lin, rendered the new female choreographers the themes and space to deal with their lives no less as an individual introspective kind of modern person than as women. Their goal, contrary to those who came before them, is to secure their own rather than collective ground and identity, to try out the capability and limit of a citizen rather than a woman, and to look forward rather than backward. This generation is in the process of defining itself; its direction towards creating a new identity is both clear and fluid. This fluidness may be the true nature of a new cultural nationalism that has emerged in an era of globalization and

modernization, one based on democracy and gender equality and characterized by individualism and internationalism, introspection and openness, uniqueness and diversification. The new generation is still creating their identity while continuing to define the Taiwanese identity as understood through the artistry of their work. While many do not feel an obligation or burden to represent Chinese history, culture or esthetics in their work, a select few find great inspiration, not nostalgia, in this subject matter. Few choreographers articulate a motivation to create work that is outspoken or political in nature, and many do not readily relate to feminism or its place in their art. These choreographers, instead, are using choreography as a vehicle through which they are fervently searching for, clarifying and expressing their identity as the new Taiwanese generation of dancers. The Taiwanese identity in the era of globalization and the post-Cloud Gate age has taken a new paradigm of self-focus, personal reflection and individual experience and orientation, which, no matter how diversifying at the beginning, will eventually reveal its collective features. Thus, after encountering the dilemma about how to deal with Chinese culture and overshadowed by political nationalism, Taiwanese cultural nationalism has reemerged thanks to the triumph of globalization, modernization and democracy, in association with the development of individualism and the postmodernist concept. As these young choreographers influence the Taiwanese collective identity, one finds that it is reconstructed upon Taiwanese individual affirmations and accomplishments.

NOTE

¹ The following female choreographers were interviewed: U.S-educated Wen-jinn Luo; Taiwan's National Institute of Arts (NIA) graduate and former Cloud Gate member, Ting-Tsu Jon; NIA graduate Ting-Chu Cho; NIA teacher and graduate Hsaio-Mei Her; Tsai Jui-Yueh student Ondine Hsiao; NIA teacher and University of Illinois graduate Ming-Shen Ku; NIA graduate and former Cloud Gate dancer Pi-Jung Wu; NIA graduate and NYU graduate Hsiu-Ping Chang; and Thirty/Sen-Ser Dance Company choreographers Shu-ping Chang and Bi-Rong Wu. Each of these choreographers' commitment to dance has earned them a reputation as an important member of Taiwan's new dance generation.

Teachers, critics and producers were also interviewed. This group included Pin-Hsiu Chen and Lu Chien-Ying. As the writer for Cloud Gate, editor of the *Performing Arts Review* and NIA graduate, Chen has published over 35 dance articles and critiques. Chen observes more than 200 dance works each year and frequently interviews choreographers and dancers who are involved in the creation of these new works. These activities afford her an informed and introspective look into the philosophies underlying the new generation. Freelance writer and former Director of Taipei Artist Village, Lu Chien-Ying, has reported on dance in Taiwan,

studied dance abroad and worked for the government in the arts. While not a choreographer, Lu, like Chen, offers a broad and historical view of how dance is transforming in Taiwan.

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